

Illustrated explanation of the holy sacraments

Hermann Rolfus, Ferreol Girardey

ILLUSTRATED EXPLANATION OF THE HOLY SACRAMENTS.



THE GRACE OF GOD.

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A COMPLETE EXPOSITION OF THE SACRAMENTS AND THE SACRAMENTALS OF THE CHURCH.

ADAPTED FROM THE ORIGINAL OF

REV. H. ROLFUS, D.D.

WITH A REFLECTION AND PRACTICE ON EACH SACRAMENT

BY VERY REV. FERREOL GIRARDEY, C.SS.R.,

Author of "Popular Instructions on Marriage," "Popular Instructions to Parents," "Mission Book for the Married," "Mission Book for the Single," etc.

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THE HOLY SACRAMENTS.

Introduction.

The Grace of God.

GOD created man out of love, and the love of God accompanies him all his life long. The life of man may be said to be an unbroken series of proofs of love and gifts of grace bestowed on him by God. These graces are, for instance, life, which God was in no wise bound to give us, health, the favorable circumstances in which He placed us at our birth, the powers of our soul. Every good thing which man receives from God is a grace, because he can claim nothing from God; all is bestowed on him out of pure bounty. "Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made." (Wisd. xi. 25.)

All proofs of love which concern natural things alone are called natural graces. Those graces, on the contrary, which are given to man to enable him to rise above nature, or, in other words,

are bestowed upon him by God for his eternal salvation, are supernatural graces, because they are given him for a supernatural end.

Supernatural graces are either within us or without us; and accordingly we speak of *interior* and *exterior* graces. The Incarnation of Our Lord, the preaching of God's word, the Passion and Death of Christ, are instances of exterior graces.

God often confers interior supernatural graces upon a man in order that by means of them he may influence the souls of others and bring them to everlasting salvation. Thus the apostles had the gift of healing the sick, raising the dead, and of working other miracles for the establishment of the truth of Christ's teaching. St. Francis Xavier possessed the gift of speaking in their own language to the heathen tribes to whom he went; and of all the miraculous deeds we read of in the lives of the saints the greater part were wrought with the purpose of quickening the faith of others. Our Lord gave this command to His apostles when He was on earth: "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: freely have you received, freely give." (Matt. x. 8.)

In consequence of these words of Our Lord the grace of which we speak is called grace freely given (*gratia gratis data*). The supernatural grace, on the other hand, which man receives for the awakening of his conscience, his conversion, justification, and sanctification, is termed grace which renders

a man pleasing to God (*gratia gratum faciens*). This, again, is a twofold grace; it consists of *actual* grace and *sanctifying* grace.

1. Man is possessed of various natural powers, with which, as stands to reason, he can only accomplish what is natural. He can, for instance, comprehend by the light of nature that there must of necessity be a God, that nothing is the work of chance. He is also able to apprehend that not all which a man does, or desires to do, is right; he is able to discern some things to be good and others evil; he can even perform some good actions. But all that is contained in divine revelation he cannot by his own natural powers discover, and from this proceeds the necessity of a revelation. Nor can man grasp the full extent of the good which it is incumbent on him to do; he cannot persevere in it for any length of time; he cannot perform it so that it shall be acceptable and well-pleasing to God. To be pleasing to God is something divine, something supernatural; it cannot be attained, or even striven after, by natural means. Of himself man cannot so much as desire what is good, much less bring it to pass. But divine grace *prevents* or anticipates human action; that is to say, it precedes all good works, otherwise man could not even think a good thought. Our Lord tells us: "Without Me you can do nothing" (John xv. 5); "No man can come to Me, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him" (John vi. 44). And the Apostle teaches

us: "It is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish." (Phil. ii. 13.)

2. Preventing grace is, however, only an influence acting upon the powers of the soul of man, stirring him up and rendering him capable of recognizing and desiring that which is good. If a man avails himself of this grace, and co-operates with it, it will remain with him and accompany him. If he co-operates with it, it will operate in him. For the grace which aids man to do that which is good is actual grace. This is the meaning of the prophet's words: "Thou hast wrought all our works for us." (Is. xxvi. 12.)

3. Actual grace, although given to all men, is not given to all in equal measure, so that every man should receive as many and as great graces as his neighbor, for one does not need as much grace as another in order to be saved. There are circumstances, positions, vocations in life which call for a greater amount of grace than others. Special graces, for instance, are required by priests, and, again, by married persons, on account of which Our Lord instituted a special sacrament for those who received Holy Orders and another for those who enter the married state. A man who is unavoidably exposed to severe temptations and many occasions of sin needs a greater amount of grace; so, also, does one who has numerous and arduous duties to discharge—e. g., a superior or a ruler. But we know that each one receives as much grace as he needs,

since God "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4); and: "The grace of God Our Saviour hath appeared to all men" (Tit. ii. 11). The graces a man receives are not apportioned to him in a capricious or arbitrary manner, but according to what God sees to be necessary for him. "To every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the giving of Christ." (Eph. iv. 7.)

4. It is within the power of man to allow one or all of these motives, suggestions, influences, etc., to pass without heeding them or making use of them. He has full freedom; the grace of God never coerces. He can if he chooses prove himself a slothful servant, who hides his talent in the earth (Matt. xxv. 25), or a wicked servant, who knows the will of his Lord, but does not act according to it (Luke xii. 47). According to his actions, reward or punishment will be his portion. "God made man from the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He added His commandments and precepts. If thou wilt keep the commandments, and perform acceptable fidelity for ever, they shall preserve thee. He hath set water and fire before thee: stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt. Before man is life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him." (Ecclus. xv. 14–18.)

5. If man avails himself of the grace of God, if he co-operates with it faithfully and earnestly

according to God's law, if he avoids evil and subdues it within himself, and employs the means ordained by God to this end, he will receive from God sanctifying grace, which will not only cleanse him from sin, but will make him holy and just, acceptable and well-pleasing to God; on this account this grace is called *sanctifying* grace. It is also termed charity, as, in the words of the Apostle: "The *charity* of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us." (Rom. v. 5.)

He who is enriched with sanctifying grace is no longer a sinner. He is a child of God, and consequently an heir of heaven. And these privileges are made his, not for any merit of his own, but because Christ, Our Lord, merited them for him by His Incarnation, His bitter Passion and Death. After the fall, and before the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ, it was not possible for any man to enter heaven. Had this been otherwise there would have been no necessity for the Son of God to become man, to suffer and to die. All are "justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii. 24.) "Christ Jesus, who is of God, is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption." (1 Cor. i. 30.)

6. Sanctifying grace does not justify man in such a manner that the merits of Christ are only necessary for us, or can be imputed to us, while the heart is as yet not free from sin; on the contrary, sin is

blotted out and the soul is made truly just and holy. Thus the Apostle says : " You are washed, you are justified, you are sanctified." (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

7. Sanctifying grace may, nay, it must, be increased in the soul. It is not of a transient, but of a permanent, character. By Jesus God " hath given us most great and precious promises: that by these you may be made partakers of the divine nature." (2 Pet. i. 4.)

8. The soul that is justified by sanctifying grace can, however, only continue in that state of justice by the help of God's grace. For not only is the good work begun from God, but through Him it is also accomplished. We must continue in the grace of God. " As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine: so neither can you, unless you abide in Me." (John xv. 4.) Sanctifying grace is lost by mortal sin; and just as the Lord God does not remember the transgressions of a sinner who is converted, so his former works of penance and his former justice avail the man no more who relapses into sin. " If the just man turn himself away from his justice, and do iniquity according to all the abominations which the wicked man useth to work, shall he live ? All his justices which he had done, shall not be remembered: in the prevarication, by which he hath prevaricated, and in his sin, which he hath committed, in them he shall die." (Ezech. xviii. 24.)

9. The Sacrament of Baptism was instituted by

God in order that we might receive sanctifying grace. Yet it is possible for those who, having received the grace of justification, have lost it, to be again justified, as the Council of Trent teaches. "As regards those who by sin have fallen from the received grace of justification, they may again be justified when, God exciting them, through the Sacrament of Penance they shall have attained to the recovery, by the merits of Christ, of the grace lost; for this manner of justification is of the fallen the reparation which the Fathers aptly have called a second plank after the shipwreck of grace lost." (Sess. vi. 14.) "Be mindful therefore from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do the first works." (Apoc. ii. 5.)

Practical Application.

1. Sanctifying grace is the most precious of all treasures; it is more precious than any riches, however great, and all that the heart of man can desire is not to be compared in value to sanctifying grace. There is nothing, therefore, after which a man should strive so earnestly as after this grace; it is the pearl spoken of in the Gospel, of which it is said: "The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it." (Matt. xiii. 45, 46.)

2. Since man by his own unaided efforts can

neither obtain this grace nor keep it when he has obtained it, it follows that none can know with absolute certainty whether he is or is not justified, unless, indeed, it is made known to him by a special revelation, as was the case with Mary Magdalen, to whom Our Lord said : "Thy sins are forgiven thee." (Luke vii. 48.) There are, however, certain signs whereby we may know whether we can venture to hope that we are pleasing in God's sight : e. g., if our love of God is fervent, if we dread the least sin, if we despise the things of this world and long after heavenly riches. But none of these things can afford us absolute certitude.

Yet this very uncertainty is in itself a grace, since we are thereby preserved from false security, which imagines itself to have reached the goal, and consequently advances no further towards it, or perhaps actually recedes from it. For this reason we are constantly urged to press onwards, and to say with the Apostle : "Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement . . . *perfecting sanctification* in the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.)

3. As, however, we are certain of this, that the actual grace which we need will never be wanting to us provided only that we make use of preventing grace, we must not lose heart in the hour of temptation, however violently it may assail us. Having put on the helmet of hope, we can say with steadfast confidence : "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13.)

Example.

The apostles Peter and Paul furnish us with a beautiful example of the manner in which man is prevented by divine grace. Peter had denied his Lord, but he remained sitting with the servants. Even when he had done the same a second time he was not conscious of the heinousness of his sin, and kept his place among the servants. Upon his third denial, however, the cock crowed, and the Saviour, turning, looked on Peter. This look was the light of grace; it pierced the soul of the apostle, he went out and wept bitterly. (Luke xxii. 62.) Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, was journeying to Damascus in order to arrest the Christians of that place and bring them bound to Jerusalem, when suddenly a light from heaven shone round about him and he was completely changed. God took from him his bodily sight, but divine grace enlightened him interiorly. Paul corresponded to grace; for three days he fasted and prayed, and when God sent Ananias to him his heart was ready—he had become a changed man and received Baptism. (Acts ix. 1–18.) And when later on he went to Philippi a certain woman was there, named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, who with other women listened to Paul's preaching. And the Lord opened her heart

"to attend to those things which were said by Paul." (Acts xvi. 14.) She became his disciple and gave him a lodging in her house. The other women heard what was said by Paul as well as she, but we are not told that they were converted. Perhaps they did not correspond to the grace given to them, and did not co-operate with it, but remained obdurate. In like manner Gesmas, the thief who was crucified on the left of Our Lord, had the same grace offered him as Dismas had, who was on the right. But he did not avail himself of that grace and died impenitent, whereas Dismas was justified.

Then, again, Stephen found it necessary to address this reproach to the Jews: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost, as your fathers did, so do you also." (Acts vii. 51.) For the Jews had seen the marvels wrought by Our Lord, and yet were not converted unto salvation.

Good Works and Merit.

Although we can only be saved by the help of God's grace, yet we must merit eternal salvation, and we must do this by co-operating with divine grace and by our good works. These are of absolute necessity, for faith alone will not save us. The kingdom of heaven is, besides, a reward which Our Lord bestows on those blessed of His Father for the good works that they have done.

God is accordingly bound to give us this reward, because He has promised it to us. Of this the Apostle Paul assures us when he says: "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned according to grace, but according to debt." (Rom. iv. 4.) We do, indeed, read these words in Holy Scripture: "When you shall have done all these things that are commanded you, say: We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which we ought to do." (Luke xvii. 10.) This is true inasmuch as it means that we are of no profit to God; that we cannot increase His greatness, His might, His majesty. On the other hand, God has voluntarily made Himself our debtor by promising us a reward. "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." (Matt. v. 12.) In rewarding good works God is only crowning His own gifts; He is but consummating that which of His mercy He began in us.

1. In order that any work may be well-pleasing to God two things are requisite: the doer of the work must be in a state of grace, and he must have a good intention. Only if we are united to Christ by faith and charity can we accomplish anything godlike, and therefore acceptable to God. Were it possible for one who is in a state of mortal sin to do anything to gain heaven his sins could be redeemed by good works. But good works must be the fruit of true sanctification of heart, the good fruits of a good tree. "Every good tree bringeth

forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit." (Matt. vii. 17.) The effects of sanctifying grace are enumerated by the Apostle under the designation of fruits of the Holy Spirit. (Gal. v. 22.)

2. If any work is to be well-pleasing to God it is not enough that it be good in itself, it must also be performed voluntarily, the means employed must be lawful in themselves, and it must be done with a pure intention. That only is a good work which a man does entirely of his own free will, without any compulsion from within or without. He must have full liberty to do it or leave it undone.

The means which are employed in the performance of a good work must be lawful. For instance: I must not take anything from a rich man to give to the poor without his permission. I must not tell a lie to save an innocent person from punishment. The Catholic Church rejects the principle: The end justifies the means.

Furthermore, a good work, in order to be acceptable to God, must be done from a good motive. It ought not to be done for the sake of human praise or human recompense, or for any human consideration whatsoever. "When you fast be not as the hypocrites, sad; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward." (Matt. vi. 16.) We ought, on the contrary,

to perform good works in the hope of obtaining an increase of sanctifying grace, and in view of heavenly riches and eternal happiness, which will be ours in a greater or less degree proportionately to the measure of our merit. "Wherefore, brethren, labor the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election." (2 Pet. i. 10.)

Now this purpose of honoring God and serving Him in all that we do is what is meant by a pure intention. By this it becomes possible for the poorest of mankind, no less than the richest, to earn great merit in the sight of God, for God does not look upon the work alone, but also on the dispositions and intentions of the doer.

3. It is not, however, necessary to renew our intention in a special manner before each and every individual action; it is, as a rule, a permanent disposition of the soul. Wherefore it is sufficient if the Christian from time to time, especially in the morning before beginning the day's work, forms the intention that all he does and leaves undone, all that he bears and suffers during the day, he will offer to further the glory of God, and thus remain ever united to the will of God. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Cor. x. 31.)

4. If the grace of God is lost through mortal sin, with the loss of sanctifying grace the supernatural merits of any good works which may have been

previously performed while in a state of grace are likewise lost; for how can supernatural merits profit one who, on account of his unhappy spiritual state, cannot enter heaven? But if the sinner is truly converted, and is again made partaker of sanctifying grace by perfect contrition or by means of the Sacrament of Penance, then the merits of his former good works are recovered and reckoned again to him when he is converted. Through venial sin sanctifying grace is not actually lost, but, as St. Thomas of Aquinas teaches us, it is weakened in its operation, hindered in its growth, and thus the way is prepared for its final extinction in the soul. On the other hand, sanctifying grace may be increased by our earnest endeavors, so that of Christians who make the salvation of their soul a matter of primary importance it may be said, in the words of the Psalmist: "They shall go from virtue to virtue." (Ps. lxxxiii. 8.)

Wherefore the Apostle exhorts us that, "doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ." (Eph. iv. 15.)

5. Although the soul which is not in a state of grace can accomplish nothing that is good, or whereby heaven can be merited, yet it would not be consistent with the justice of God if the good that a sinner does went unrewarded. Not only can the sinner obtain temporal and natural graces by his good works, but also supernatural graces,

particularly those which predispose for conversion. It was because of this that Daniel thus admonished King Nabuchodonosor: "Redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor; perhaps [God] will forgive thy offences." (Dan. iv. 24.)

And Jesus, the son of Sirach, says: "Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins." (Ecclus. iii. 33.)

If God spared the city of Ninive because of the penance and fasting of the Ninivites, can we imagine that He will not grant a temporal recompense to the good works performed by the sinner?

6. In Holy Scripture prayer, fasting, and almsgiving are particularly recommended to us. The archangel Raphael inculcated them upon Tobias when he said to him: "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold: for alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting." (Tob. xii. 8, 9.)

All good works may be classed under these three principal ones. Prayer is an act which has reference to God. It includes mental as well as vocal prayer. The principal acts appertaining to prayer are hearing Mass, sermons, Christian instruction, the reception of the sacraments, besides all practices of devotion, acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, humility, good resolutions, etc.

Fasting consists in keeping the body in subjec-

tion and mortifying the desires of the flesh. To it belongs abstaining from the gratification of the senses, from dances, plays, and the like; placing a restraint upon the eyes, the ears, the appetite, the impulses of curiosity and of anger. This is also fasting, but it is a spiritual fast.

The enemies of the Church hold works of mortification in peculiar detestation, and they wrongfully accuse Catholics of believing that by the mere holiness of their works heaven can be gained. But every Catholic knows that practices of mortification are only a means of conquering the passions, strengthening the moral powers, purging the soul from what is evil, in order to be more free and unhampered in the practice of good.

Holy Scripture thus admonishes us: "Christ therefore having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sins." (1 Pet. iv. 1.)

All works of brotherly love are included in almsgiving. He who warns the sinful, sets the erring right, visits the sick, comforts the sorrowful, may be said to give a spiritual alms.

Practical Application.

1. Make it your principal care to be always in a state of grace in order that you may lay up merits for heaven. Peter had labored all night and had

taken nothing. How sad it would have been for him had this occurred frequently. How much sadder would it be for you if at the close of your life you were compelled to say: "I have walked in darkness; I have labored and have taken nothing; my life has been utterly unprofitable to me!" Such would be the condition of a soul which had lost sanctifying grace and died in mortal sin. We will fervently invoke the aid of the Holy Spirit, and implore Him to grant us grace to persevere and to be steadfast in all that is good. The words which Our Lord spoke to the angel (bishop) of the Church of Smyrna may be addressed also to us: "Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life." (Apoc. ii. 10.)

2. Forasmuch as we are not able to bring to pass anything good without the grace of God, let us be specially on our guard against spiritual pride, which would persuade us that we have achieved something in our own strength, and that we may take credit to ourselves for the result of our exertions, our struggles, and our prayers. We will humble ourselves before God, and say with David: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to Thy name give glory." (Ps. cxiii. 9.)

Examples.

That the prayers and good works of a sinner are not to be regarded as worthless is proved not only

by the example of the Ninivites, who did penance, but still more by that of David, who was a model of penance. We read, too, of King Manasses that he did evil before the Lord, and practised the abominations of idol worship. Therefore the Lord brought upon him the armies of the Assyrians, and they carried him, bound with chains and fetters, to Babylon. And after that he was in distress he prayed to the Lord his God, and did penance exceedingly before the God of his fathers. God heard his prayer, and brought him again to Jerusalem; and Manasses knew that the Lord was God, and he abolished the worship of the strange gods. (2 Paral. xxxiii.) When Peter was in prison prayer was offered to God for him by the faithful without ceasing, and God brought him forth out of prison under the guidance of an angel. The mortification Judith practised caused her to find favor in the sight of God. She wore haircloth upon her loins, and fasted all the days of her life except the Sabbaths, and the new moons, and the feasts of the house of Israel. Wherefore the Lord strengthened her, that she might undertake the deliverance of her people out of the hand of Holofernes. (Judith x. 6.) Job imposed penances upon himself because he was conscious of having spoken unwisely before God. "I reprehend myself, and do penance in dust and ashes." (Job xlii. 6.) St. Paul does not merely exhort his hearers to crucify the flesh, that the body of sin may be destroyed

(Rom. vi. 6), but he is able to set himself before them as a pattern, saying: "I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection: lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." (1 Cor. ix. 27).

The widow of Sarephta who in the time of famine was willing to give Elias her last morsel of bread was rewarded by God for her good deed: "The pot of meal wasted not, and the cruse of oil was not diminished." (3 Kings xvii. 16.)

Cornelius, the heathen centurion, was a religious man, who "feared God with all his house," giving much alms to the people and always praying to God. To those prayers and those alms he owed it that God sent to him Peter, who was then lodging in Joppe, that he might receive him into the Church of God. (Acts x.)

The Holy Sacraments.

THE Holy Spirit works where and how He wills. The all-merciful God pours forth His grace into the souls of men in whatever manner He pleases, either mediately or immediately. The regular means of grace appointed by Christ are the sacraments, by the reception of which the work of sanctification is begun, carried on, and completed in the soul, and grace, if it has been lost, is again renewed.

1. By the word sacrament, taken in a general sense, has always been understood something venerable and mysterious, something that appertains to God, or an act whereby man is brought into relation with God, as, for instance, an oath. But the Church understands by a sacrament one of those actual and visible signs which Christ the Lord instituted in order to give to the faithful the comforting assurance that at the moment of receiving these visible signs they are also made partakers of the invisible divine grace. A sacrament is, accordingly, the union of what is visible and what is invisible, of what is natural and supernatural, of what is corporal and what is spiritual. As man is constituted

of body and soul joined together, so in His wisdom and love God has likewise attached spiritual grace to a visible sign, so that the senses may be convinced of what the soul believes. St. Augustine gives yet another reason why the Saviour instituted visible signs of His invisible grace. He says that God was pleased to employ those visible and outward means of imparting grace to the soul in order that Christians might have certain tokens whereby they might recognize one another, be united together, and easily be distinguished from heretics and other unbelievers.

2. Three things, therefore, are essential to a sacrament:

a. A visible sign.

b. An invisible grace.

c. That it should have been instituted by Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ alone, who is the author and restorer of all things in nature and in grace, possesses the power of attaching supernatural graces to outward signs.

The things that are requisite to the valid administration of the sacraments, e. g., water in Baptism, are called the *matter*, and the words pronounced by the administrator in performing the solemn act are called the *form*, of the sacrament. The visible signs are sensible signs or actions indicating the manner in which the graces conferred operate upon the soul. Thus, for instance, in Baptism

water is poured upon the head of the person who is baptized. Now as water cleanses the body, so the grace dispensed in the Sacrament of Baptism cleanses the soul. The visible signs of the sacraments are, however, not merely sensible and significant: they are also *effectual* signs, for they do not simply indicate that the soul has received the grace in question, as Luther and some others erroneously assert, but they are the means whereby it is imparted.

3. Since the sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ Himself, nothing that is essential can be changed in the matter, nor can any alteration be made in the form. For instance, Baptism would be absolutely invalid were anything else but water employed in its administration; and if the water were poured on the head without the formula expressly prescribed to accompany it, it would be no Baptism at all. Moreover, it belongs to the efficacy of a sacrament that the person who dispenses it should have the intention of doing precisely that which Christ ordained to be done. If this intention is wanting the sacrament is null. Furthermore, a sacrament can only be administered by one who is fully authorized to dispense it; e. g., only a bishop has power to administer the Sacrament of Holy Orders; were a priest to presume to officiate in this manner it would be a grievous sin on his part, and the ceremony would be entirely invalid.

4. The holy sacraments derive their efficacy from the merits of Jesus Christ. He by His Passion and death earned for us the graces which are imparted to the soul by the sacraments. Hence their validity does not depend either on the worthiness of the individual who dispenses them or of him who receives them. An unworthy priest, for example really and truly absolves the repentant sinner, and the sinner who receives communion in the state of mortal sin, nevertheless really receives the sacrament. But he who administers a sacrament unworthily, not being himself in a state of grace, adds another mortal sin to those he has already committed; and he who receives a sacrament unworthily receives it to his condemnation instead of to his salvation. Hence we rightly say that he who receives a sacrament unworthily is guilty of an awful sin, the sin of sacrilege; for he robs God of that to which he has no right, that is to say, of the sacrament, which is none the less a supernatural and divine act even when received unworthily, and when the unworthiness of the recipient is an impediment to the outpouring of divine grace.

5. Christ the Lord instituted seven sacraments neither more nor less. These are:

(1) Baptism, (2) Confirmation, (3) the Most Hol Sacrament of the Altar, (4) Penance, (5) Extreme Unction, (6) Holy Orders, (7) Matrimony.

The necessity for these seven sacraments will be

made apparent if the supernatural life of the soul is compared with the natural life of the body.

a. Man is born into the world. By Baptism he is born again in a spiritual manner and incorporated into the body of faithful Christians.

b. The body grows, and as it increases in size its powers ought to be developed in the same proportion. By Confirmation the soul, while in an early stage of growth, is strengthened and prepared to withstand the temptations of the Evil Spirit, of bad men, and also those temptations which proceed from within our corrupt nature.

c. The body requires daily food. The soul is nourished by the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar.

d. The body when injured requires to be healed, to have remedies applied to it. In the Sacrament of Penance the sacred means of cure are placed within our reach, and by them the sick soul is made whole.

e. If the body is out of health the physician is called in, and the sufferer must take medicines if he would recover from his indisposition. The priest is the physician of the soul, and in the Sacrament of Extreme Unction he dispenses strength and consolation.

f. In the civil constitution there must be certain persons in positions of authority, who, as God's representatives, maintain order and enforce the laws. Even so in the Church of God there must be governors, guardians, watchmen, law-givers,

dispensers of graces. Those who are chosen by God receive in the Sacrament of Holy Orders the powers and the authority for the office they are to fill.

g. In the Sacrament of Matrimony parents, whose duty it is to train up children for the kingdom of God, have grace conferred on them to accomplish this task, and thus to increase the number of the Church's worthy members.

We find the seven sacraments typified in the seven pillars upon which divine wisdom raised the house which she built for herself (Prov. ix. 1); as also in the seven lamps which the prophet Zacharias saw upon a golden candlestick, and the seven funnels for the lights that were upon the top thereof (Zach. iv. 2); likewise in the command to wash seven times in the Jordan given to Naaman the Syrian who by thus washing was cleansed of his leprosy (4 Kings v. 14). As there are seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, so there are seven sacraments, fountains of salvation, whence the Christian soul can draw the water of life.

6. The sacraments of Baptism and of Penance impart sanctifying grace, which is the supernatural life of the soul. He who has not this supernatural life is spiritually dead. Baptism and Penance are therefore the means whereby those who are spiritually dead are quickened again to the life of grace; on account of this they are termed the *sacraments of the dead.* The other sacraments may only be received by those who possess this supernatural life

of the soul, who are already in a state of grace. They are called the *sacraments of the living*, and increase supernatural grace in the soul each time they are received. In addition to this each sacrament confers a grace peculiar to itself, which is called sacramental grace, and is distinct from sanctifying grace. It consists of a special assistance which the sacrament in question was instituted to convey. What this grace is in each sacrament respectively will be shown in the proper place. "Of His fulness we have all received, and grace for grace." (John i. 16.)

7. Of the seven sacraments three—that is, Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders—can only be received once: and it would be a grave sin were any one to presume to be baptized or confirmed over again, or to be ordained priest a second time. A Christian, if he had the misfortune to fall away from his faith, and become, let us say, a Jew or a Mohammedan, must, should he repent and desire to return to the bosom of the Church, do penance for his sin, but he must not again be baptized. And should a priest have apostatized, when once he has been absolved and has again received faculties from the bishop he is at liberty to resume all his priestly functions. The three sacraments which we have named impress upon the soul a stamp or *character* that is indelible. This *character* is a spiritual mark, whereby it may be known that the soul which has received it is specially consecrated

and dedicated to God and to Jesus Christ, that it belongs to God, that it is His servant, a warrior pledged to His service. This character will be for the blessed a distinctive mark to their everlasting honor and glory, but to the lost it will be a mark to their everlasting confusion, for it will make known to all that they received the grace of God and rejected it, and on that account are more culpable than the heathen, who never saw the light of faith or were made partakers of the grace of the sacraments.

Practical Application.

1. The Saviour gave this command to His disciples: "Give not that which is holy to dogs: neither cast ye your pearls before swine." (Matt. vii. 6.) The holy things and pearls of which He speaks are nothing else than the sacraments, which we receive from the hands of the successors of the apostles. Our Lord designates those who do not value the pearls aright as dogs and swine. Consequently those who receive any of the sacraments unworthily are to be compared to dogs and swine. These severe expressions came from the lips of the bountiful Lord, who is Himself the giver of all grace. They ought, indeed, to make us tremble, and feel how all-important it is to examine one's self before venturing to approach the holy mysteries.

2. The prohibition laid down by God in the second commandment, "Thou shalt not take the

name of God in vain," includes under the name of God the Deity Himself and all that proceeds from Him. Now the sacraments are from Him, and since the heavens as being God's throne, and the cross the instrument of the Passion of His divine Son, are not to be spoken of without the utmost reverence, so it would be no less sinful to speak of the holy sacraments in a depreciatory, careless, or irreverent manner. He who does so incurs the displeasure of God, and exposes himself to the danger of being deprived of the grace of the sacraments, and dying in a state of reprobation.

The Ceremonies which are attached to the Sacraments.

The administration of the sacraments is accompanied with ceremonies, some of which indicate the grace conferred by the sacrament, while others prepare the soul for the reception of that grace, or confirm it when it is received. These ceremonies have been instituted by the Church in the spirit of Jesus Christ, who on various occasions when bestowing His benefits made use of certain outward signs. Thus we read that when little children were presented to Him He imposed His hands on them, prayed, and blessed them. (Matt. xix. 13–15.) Before the miraculous multiplication of loaves He looked up to heaven and blessed the

loaves before He broke them. (Matt. xiv. 19.) When He cured the two blind men by the wayside He touched their eyes, although it would have been enough had He merely spoken the words: Receive your sight. (Matt. xx. 34.) And when He healed the deaf and dumb boy He put His fingers into his ears, touched his tongue with spittle, and looking up to heaven groaned, and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened. (Mark vii. 33.)

At the Last Supper Our Lord took the bread and wine into His holy and venerable hands, prayed, and blessed them, before distributing them to His disciples. And it is recorded that when taking leave of the apostles before His Ascension He blessed them, and "whilst He blessed them He departed from them and was carried up to heaven." (Luke xxiv. 51.)

The Church attaches these ceremonies to the sacraments for the purpose of reminding the faithful of the virtue of the sacraments, of augmenting their respect for them, and setting before them the responsibilities they take upon themselves when they receive those sacred sacraments.

Baptism.

Baptism is the most indispensable of all the sacraments, for by it we are made Christians, and thus enabled to receive the other sacraments. To have previously been baptized is essential to the valid reception of any one of the other sacraments. Baptism is the sacrament whereby, by water and the invocation of the three divine Persons, man is cleansed from sin, sanctified by the grace of God, and made a child of God and an heir of heaven. Baptism is therefore the gate whereby we are admitted into the Church of God and, as members of the Church, are incorporated into the mystical body of Christ, who is the Head of the Church.

Thus upon Baptism depends our adoption as children of God and our eternal salvation. Hence Our Lord commanded His apostles: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)

When Peter was preaching Christ crucified to the assembled multitudes on the day of Pentecost, and the Jews, in fear and compunction, asked:

"What shall we do?" he answered them: "Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 38.)

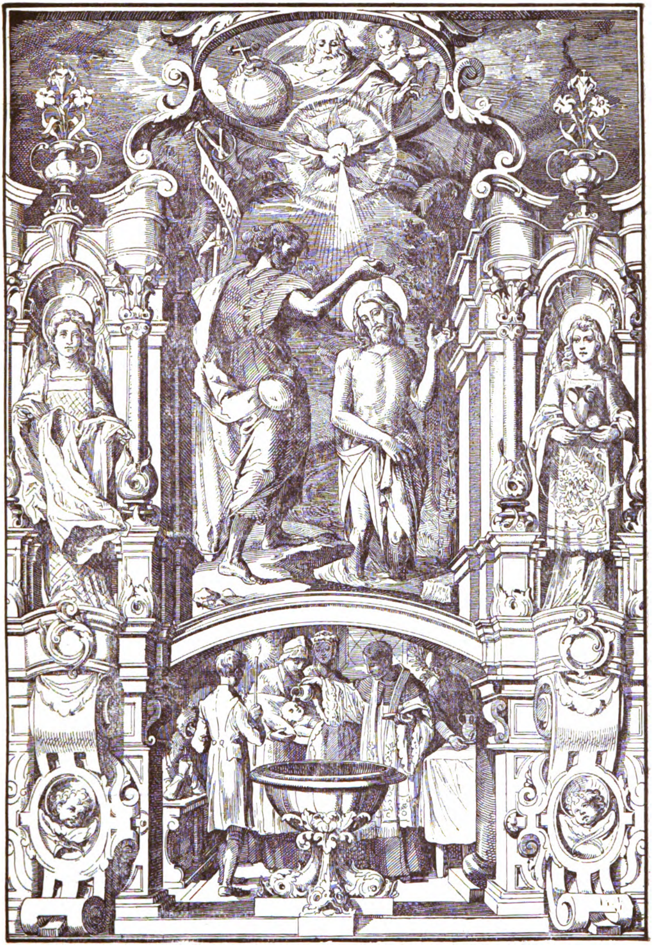
Hence it is seen that Baptism is the most indispensable of the sacraments.

1. The outward sign in Baptism is washing with water, accompanied at the same time with the words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The washing with water without the words would be just as futile as the utterance of the words without the application of the water. The water used must be real, natural water. No artificial water, such as, for example, rose-water distilled from rose-leaves, eau de Cologne, or any other fluid, such as wine, for instance, must on any account be employed. On Holy Saturday and on the eve of Pentecost the Church prepares water by a special ceremonial to be used by priests in administering baptism. In the case of a layman baptizing, holy water should be employed, if there be any at hand.

The water is poured upon the head of the child in the form of a cross, and in such a manner as that it shall run off. In exceptional cases, e. g., when all does not go well at the time of birth, and the water cannot be poured upon the head, it may be poured on some other part of the body.

No other formula but the one dictated by Our

"Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the Jordan."—Mark i. 9.



"Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."—John iii. 5.

BAPTISM.

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

REFLECTION.—Before receiving the Sacrament of Baptism we were, through original sin, children of wrath and slaves of Satan. By Baptism we became children of God, members of His Church and heirs of heaven. The recipient of Baptism is previously required to renounce Satan, whose slave he is by original sin, and his works and his pomps, that is, sin and all sinful pleasures; to profess his faith in the Blessed Trinity, in the incarnation and redemption of the Son of God, in the holy Catholic Church and in other articles of the creed. By Baptism our soul is cleansed from all sin and endowed with sanctifying grace, which makes it holy and elevates it to the supernatural order and enables it to merit heaven; and, moreover, the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity are infused into our soul.

PRACTICE.—Let us often reflect with gratitude on the infinite mercy of God in calling us to the true Church, in making us His children, friends and heirs by Baptism, without any merit or claim on our part. Let us daily thank God on our knees for this most precious gift of the true faith, and let us strive by a good life never more to become the slaves of Satan or to do his works.

PRAYER.—O my God, it was without any merit on my part that Thou didst call me by Baptism to the true faith and made me Thy child and heir, and I have so often been ungrateful by my sins for this priceless grace. Forgive me through the merits of Jesus Christ. I now again sincerely renounce Satan and all his works and pomps; help me henceforth to keep these vows faithfully. O Mary, obtain this grace for me. Amen.

Lord Himself may be employed at Baptism. A form of words such as: I baptize thee in the name of Jesus; or, I baptize thee in the name of the Most Holy Trinity, would not be of the slightest avail. Nor is it allowable for any one but the person who pours the water to repeat the words, and they must be repeated at the same time that the water is poured on the head.

Since Baptism is necessary to salvation, this sacrament—and this one only—may be administered by the laity. Yet the proper person to officiate is the priest of the parish, or any other priest whom he empowers to take his place. Only in an emergency, when there is not time to summon a priest, a layman, and in the absence of a man a woman, may administer Baptism. Preference in this case ought to be given to one who has been confirmed rather than to one who has not yet been confirmed. Not the faithful only, but unbelievers, Jews, and heathens also, can baptize if they have the will and intention to do what the Catholic Church ordains to be done. If, for example, a Jewish mother sees her child in danger of death, and the thought enters her mind: Supposing the Christians were right, and it were really true that no unbaptized person could go to heaven, for lack of Baptism my child would lose heaven! And if this mother were then to say to herself: I must make sure of this eternal happiness for my child; and if she were to take water and baptize the child with the

full purpose of doing what the Church ordains to be done, that Baptism would certainly be valid.

2. The change wrought in the soul by Baptism is so complete that the state it produces can be compared to nothing but spiritual birth. After Baptism the soul is no longer what it was before. Original sin and all actual sin are remitted, and the individual is made pure in God's sight. But the soul of the baptized is not only pure, but also holy, and consequently it is an object of the divine complacency, for the Holy Spirit has made it His dwelling-place, and enriched it with divine gifts. It bears the indelible mark of a member of Christ's body, and is qualified to receive all the other means of grace provided by the Church for her children. All eternal and temporal penalties are remitted; man is born again for God. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John iii. 5.) "Buried with [Christ] in Baptism, in whom also you are risen again by the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him up from the dead." (Col. ii. 12.)

3. Although the soul is completely cleansed from original sin by Baptism, yet man is not thereby at once restored to the state of innocence in which Adam was before the fall. This state of perfection is only attained after death; during our existence here below our frail body is not freed from evil

concupiscence. Nor is it freed from the temptations and trials of life, from sickness and death; for the Christian must resemble his divine Master. Christ Our Lord lived on earth, He endured hardships, He suffered, and He died. But these temptations and trials ought to be for us a rich seed-time, occasions for the practice of virtue, if we persistently struggle against our passions, bear patiently the disagreeable trials of life, and by the help of God bring all the perverse affections of the heart under the dominion of our reason. Thus God, when He delivered the Israelites out of the hand of their enemies and conducted them to the promised land, allowed some tribes still to remain, who incessantly provoked the Israelites to battle, and in this way afforded them an opportunity for the display of their courage. In like manner the elect of God fight the good fight, and thereby obtain the crown of justice—a crown which is all the more glorious according as the victories of which it is the prize are glorious.

4. In the Old Testament a type of the Sacrament of Baptism is found in the wondrous fountain which the prophet Zacharias beheld in a vision: "In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." (Zach. xiii. 1.)

The prophet Ezechiel, again, speaking in the name of the Lord, makes the following announcement: "I will pour upon you clean water, and you

shall be cleansed from all your filthiness." (Ezech. xxxvi. 25.) The Baptism of John also was only typical, as he himself stated : " I indeed baptize you in water unto penance: but He that shall come after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear ; He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and in fire." (Matt. iii. 11.)

5. With respect to the institution of Baptism two distinct moments of time must be observed : the moment when the Saviour instituted Baptism, and the moment when He issued the command that every one should be baptized. This sacrament was instituted when Our Lord Himself was baptized by John, when the Most Holy Trinity testified to its divine origin and the water received from Christ its sanctifying virtue. As St. Augustine says : " Our Lord was baptized, not because He stood in need of purification, but in order that, purifying the water by its contact with His sacred body, He might communicate to it the power to purge away sin." The precept to baptize was given when Our Lord issued the command : " Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Since that time it is obligatory upon all men, if they desire eternal salvation, to be baptized. It must, however, be borne in mind that, although this sacrament was ordained before Christ suffered, yet from His Passion and death it derives all its virtue and efficacy, equally with the other sacraments.

The Baptism of Infants.

When Christ the Lord said to Nicodemus: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5), He made not a single exception to the rule He then laid down. And since we are told that nothing that is defiled can enter into the heavenly Jerusalem (Apoc. xxi. 27), it follows that no unbaptized child can enter into the kingdom of heaven, because it is stained with the pollution of original sin.

Hence we may draw the undeniable conclusion that infants ought to be baptized, as was customary in apostolic times, for we know that the apostles baptized infants as well as adults. In the Acts of the Apostles it is recorded that at Philippi St. Paul baptized Lydia, the seller of purple, with all her household, that is, with all her whole family. (Acts xvi. 15.)

Nowhere in the writers of the first centuries of Christianity do we find the opinion expressed that young children cannot receive the grace of Baptism because they cannot believe what they do not yet know. To quote the beautiful words of St. Augustine: "Our mother the Church gives to the new-born infant the feet of others that they may come to it, the heart of others that they may

believe, the tongue of others that they may make confession."

The Church has always urged upon Christians the duty of bringing their children as soon as possible to the font of regeneration, and St. Cyprian speaks in reprobation of a bishop who thought that the Baptism of infants ought to be deferred until the eighth day after birth, because circumcision was appointed to take place on that day. Nor did Cyprian condemn this opinion on his own authority alone ; he previously consulted his brethren in the episcopate, and then definitely declared that Baptism was not to be postponed until eight days had elapsed, but was to be administered immediately after the birth of an infant.

The Roman Catechism prescribes thus :

Let the faithful be admonished to carry their children to the church, as soon as this can be done safely, and have them baptized with the proper ceremonies. For as there exists no other way whereby infants can be saved except by Baptism, it stands to reason that those do a grievous wrong who deprive them longer than necessity demands of the grace of this sacrament ; more especially, as, on account of their tender age, the dangers that encompass them in life are almost innumerable.

Christian parents should accordingly remember that the following words spoken by Our Lord apply to new-born infants as well as to older children: "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and for-

bid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." (Mark x. 14.)

The Preparation of Adults for the Reception of Holy Baptism.

When the person to be baptized is not an infant, but an adult, who has the firm desire and purpose to be baptized, the following things are requisite:

The candidate for Baptism must believe in the true God and in Jesus Christ, His Son; he must hope in God, and trust to obtain forgiveness of his sins and everlasting felicity. He must have at least some incipient love of God, and contrition for the sins he has committed. He must renounce Satan and all his works, and have a steadfast intention to cleave to Christ. He must also be firmly resolved to keep the commandments of God, and to submit to all the ordinances of the Church. It is not indispensable, even when the person to be baptized is grown up, that he should be thoroughly instructed on all points, if only he has the will to believe all that the Catholic Church proposes to him to be believed.

Conditional Baptism.

Cases occur—and, indeed, not unfrequently—in which it is impossible to know for certain whether Baptism has been administered, and administered

validly; as, for instance, if some child is found which has been abandoned by its mother; for if a mother abandons her child, either from heartlessness or on account of poverty, it may safely be assumed that she has not troubled herself about the salvation of its soul. Or, again, if an infant has been privately baptized when in danger of death a doubt may arise whether the person who administered Baptism had the right intention or performed the ceremony aright. If this doubt is really well grounded the child ought to be baptized conditionally, with the addition of these words: If thou art not already baptized, I baptize thee, etc. If the person who baptizes is a Christian, well instructed in his religion—a Catholic nurse, for example—the child must not be baptized again, even conditionally. Children baptized by Protestant ministers have, as a rule, to be baptized again conditionally on account of the carelessness with which Baptism is sometimes administered by them, and the want of a right intention, which may make their Baptism invalid.

Sponsors.

The custom of providing those who are brought to the baptismal font with godparents, who to a certain extent are their spiritual teachers and guides, dates back from the time of the apostles. To this St. Dionysius bears witness when he says: "The

idea suggested itself to the mind of our divinely appointed guides [the apostles] to receive children in so solemn a manner that the natural parents should be required to deliver over their child to some person conversant with divine things, as to a tutor, under whose authority, like that of a father or guardian, the child shall remain for the whole of his life." These godparents act in a measure as sureties to the Church that the person receiving Baptism shall be instructed in the Catholic religion, in case the parents should be unable to perform this duty or should be culpably negligent of it. Such being the obligation which rests upon godparents, it follows that only those can be chosen for the office who are both able and willing to instruct their godchildren in the Catholic faith and confirm them in it. Non-Catholics cannot, therefore, be godparents; at most they can be witnesses of the Baptism, provided there is some one else at hand who will undertake the duties of a Catholic godfather. It is also incumbent on godparents to guide their godchildren to all that is right in order that they may really fulfil the promises which have been made for them. St. Dionysius quotes the solemn promise which in his time godparents were required to make. It is as follows: "I promise that as soon as this child is capable of understanding the sacred truths of religion I will endeavor by untiring exhortations to lead him wholly to renounce all that is contrary

to godliness, and to profess and practise those things which he has promised to believe and to do." The promise required of sponsors in the present day at Baptism is couched in much the same terms.

As a rule only one person, of either sex, stands sponsor for a child ; at most only one man and one woman.

Baptism creates a spiritual relationship between the baptizer and the baptized, also between the baptizer and the parents of the baptized on the one hand, and between godparent and godchild, also between the sponsors and the natural parents, on the other. Without a papal dispensation no marriage can be lawfully concluded between any of them.

It stands to reason that persons cannot act as sponsors in regard to their own children, because the godparents are substitutes for them. Grandparents are, however, not excluded from the office.

No one is eligible as a sponsor who has not been confirmed. Girls must be at least twelve, and boys fourteen, years old ; only persons who are well instructed in the faith and of irreproachable morals ought to be chosen as godparents. Members of Religious Orders, again, are excluded, as they cannot take upon themselves parental duties.

Baptismal Names.

As a matter of course, a name is given to children upon their birth into the world, and in the Christian

Church they receive this name at their Baptism. Originally it was usual for adults to retain the name they already bore, but in the first centuries of the Church the custom was introduced of taking another name at the baptismal font, because the Christian is then born again to a new life. The names given generally expressed some excellent quality or virtue, or were taken from some memorable event, e. g., Leo (lion), Victor (conqueror), Gregory (watchful), Benedict (blessed), Fidelis (faithful), Theodore (the gift of God), Stephen (crowned), Sophia (wisdom), Catharine (pure), Clara (bright), Margaret (pearl), Pulchra (beautiful), etc. But ere long the Church counselled the faithful to call their children by the name of some holy martyr, that they might be ever mindful of the virtues that distinguished their patron. Moreover, we find St. Dionysius of Alexandria and St. Chrysostom exhorting parents to desist from giving pagan names to their children. Names taken from the Old and New Testament and those of the angels were generally given at Baptism. Ridiculous names, the appellations of heathen deities or of very wicked persons, are prohibited by the Roman ritual. The most suitable names to be given to children are the names of saints and eminent Christians, especially those whose circumstances were somewhat similar to those in which the child will be placed, or who may be proposed as models for the imitation of all. It is advisable to acquaint

the child with the history of its patron, and to teach it fervently to invoke his intercession, in order to animate and encourage it in the pursuit of what is good by the thought of his example and prayers. The Roman martyrology contains a long list of the names of God's saints, and it would be well to make choice of those rather than of any others.

The Baptism of Desire and of Blood.

God, who in His mercy gave to man an external sign to which He attached spiritual regeneration, does not, however, when the reception of the outward form is impossible, withhold the operation of His divine grace if the necessary spiritual preparation and the desire for the grace are not wanting. He who is animated by a pure love of God, united to perfect contrition for the sins he has committed, who is firmly resolved to solicit Baptism on the first available occasion, is capable of receiving divine grace and worthy of it. Sanctifying grace is, in fact, actually bestowed on such a one. This longing for holy Baptism is called the Baptism of Desire.

"He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him. If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 21, 23.)

The Baptism of Desire purges away original sin and actual sin; it also remits the eternal, but not the

temporal penalty of sin; nor does it qualify for the reception of the other sacraments, because it is only through Baptism that we are made members of Christ and incorporated into the body of the Church.

There is also another substitute for Baptism, and that is martyrdom for the sake of Christ, which is called the Baptism of Blood. Those are martyrs who, if called upon to abjure the true faith or to practise idolatrous ceremonies, prefer to suffer death, or torture worse than death, rather than yield to such a demand.

If an adult as yet unbaptized were to voluntarily surrender his life out of love to Christ and in order to confess Christ, he would receive the Baptism of Blood, and at the same time he would, together with sanctifying grace, obtain remission of sin, as well as the cancelling of the punishment, both eternal and temporal, due to sin. Even infants can receive this Baptism of Blood: witness the feast of the Holy Innocents which the Church celebrates. It is evident, moreover, that if young children, who cannot as yet have any explicit desire for the kingdom of heaven, are capable of receiving Baptism by water they are also capable of enjoying the fruits of the Baptism of Blood.

The Ceremonies of Holy Baptism.

As has already been said, the Church makes use of further ceremonies in the administration of the holy sacraments, which have for their object to destroy the influence of the Evil One, to confirm the work of grace, and to indicate the importance and solemnity of the act itself. These ceremonies precede, accompany, and follow Baptism.

1. The ceremonies before Baptism.

The godparents carry the child to the entrance of the church, but not as yet into the body of the building, since the child is not yet a member of the Church, and must first express the wish to be baptized.

The priest now advances to meet the child, and after hearing from the godparents the name given to him he thus interrogates him:

"What dost thou ask of the Church of God?"

The godparents answer in the name of the child:

"Faith."

The priest continues:

"What does faith obtain for thee?"

Again the godparents reply:

"Life everlasting."

The priest then says:

"If thou wilt enter into life, keep the command-

ments. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself."

He then breathes three times upon the face of the child in the form of a cross, saying: "Depart from him, thou unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost." As the Lord God in paradise breathed into Adam a living soul, so into the infant who is baptized a new soul is to be breathed, which derives its life from the cross of Christ. At the same time a rule of conduct is given him for his whole life; he is admonished to keep the one great commandment which contains the whole law. But first the child must be delivered out of the power of the Evil One, under whose dominion he has fallen through original sin.

The child is now admitted into the number of those who are to receive Baptism, and is prepared for it by the following ceremonies:

2. The priest makes the sign of the cross upon the forehead and breast of the infant.

3. He lays his hand upon his head.

4. He puts into his mouth a grain of salt, a symbol of the gift of heavenly wisdom of which he is to be the recipient.

5. He again exorcises him, making meanwhile the sign of the cross over him three times, and once upon the forehead.

6. He then lays the end of his stole upon the child and admits him into the Church, saying:

"Enter into the temple of God, that thou mayest have part with Christ unto life everlasting."

The godparents now enter the church with the child.

7. Having reached the font, they recite, for themselves and for the child, the Apostles' Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. This they do to show themselves to be orthodox Christians, who will bring up in the true faith the infant whom they have brought to be baptized.

8. The priest next exorcises the child once more, signing him three times with the sign of the holy cross. Then wetting his finger with spittle he touches with it the ears and nostrils of the child, saying: Ephpheta, that is, Be thou opened to the savor of sweetness. "But do thou fly hence, O accursed spirit, for the judgments of God will overtake thee."

9. The benediction of the Church having now been given, the evil enemy being banished, and the orthodoxy of the godparents established, it is necessary that the person who is to be baptized should declare his determination to break with everything that is contrary to the kingdom of God. The priest, who has hitherto been wearing a purple stole, the sign of penance, exchanges it for a white one, and puts these questions to the godparents:

"Dost thou renounce Satan? And all his works? And all his pomps?"

To each question they reply: "I do renounce them."

10. The priest then anoints the child with the holy oil upon the breast and between the shoulders in order that he may be strengthened to fight as a valiant warrior of Jesus Christ against the evil that he has just renounced. Thus he is also to take upon himself the yoke of Christ, and follow Him, whose disciple he desires to become.

11. The priest next asks the child expressly if he believes all the articles of the Apostles' Creed, and the godparents reply to each question severally with the words: "I do believe." After making sure, by a definite question, that the child has not already received private Baptism, he proceeds to administer the sacrament in the manner described above.

The Ceremonies after Baptism.

1. After Baptism the priest anoints the child on the top of the head, not with ordinary oil, but with oil mixed with balm, to which is given the name of *chrism*. This oil is consecrated for the purpose, like the other oil with which the breast and shoulders are anointed, by the bishop on Holy Thursday. Jesus Our Lord, as our supreme King, Priest, and Prophet, is also the Christ, that is, the Anointed; and forasmuch as the baptized person is incorpo rated into Christ, he is anointed to show that he

now belongs to the same royal and sacerdotal race.

2. A white garment is laid or put on the child. This is significant of the marriage garment, the robe of innocence, which he is to preserve without stain, that he may appear in it before the judgment-seat of God.

3. The priest also gives a lighted taper to the godparents. It is a symbol of a living faith, the light which the Christian should make to shine before men. It is intended to remind the child that he, like the wise virgins in the Gospel, must watch, so that when he is called to the nuptials he may be ready and may go forth to meet the Lord rich in good works.

In many Catholic families it is customary to keep the baptismal taper and light it again on the occasion of the child's first communion, when he renews with his own lips the vows his godparents made for him in his infancy. The taper is then laid by again, to be brought out anew and rekindled at the hour of death as a token of the perpetual light which will soon shine upon him who ends his earthly career in the peace of God.

After the ceremonial appointed by the Church is ended the priest dismisses the newly baptized with the blessing: "Go in peace, and the Lord be with thee."

Practical Application.

1. Seeing, then, that by the mercy of God we have received such great graces, we ought to show ourselves profoundly grateful for them. The anniversary of our Baptism should be regarded as a festival, to be solemnly kept by holy communion, almsgiving, prayer, and the renewal of our baptismal vows. We ought besides frequently to renew the promises made at our Baptism; this may be done when assisting at divine worship on Sundays.

2. In heathen lands millions of infants die without Baptism. Almost as soon as they are born into the world, abandoned to their fate by unnatural parents, their brief term of life is ended, and with their earthly existence they lose all chance of eternal life. In Christian countries, too, thousands of unhappy children are forsaken or sadly neglected by their parents. By contributing to an institution where such children are received—an orphanage or refuge—by supporting the work of the Holy Childhood, or by paying for the education of some poor child, we may make a suitable return to God for the great graces He has vouchsafed to bestow on us.

3. But should any one have the misfortune to lose the grace of Baptism, to him may be addressed the words Our Lord spoke: "Be mindful, therefore, from whence thou art fallen: and do penance, and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and

will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou do penance." (Apoc. ii. 5.)

Examples.

Candace, the Queen of the Ethiopians, had in her service a God-fearing Jew, who had charge over all her treasures. We read that on one occasion this man had been to Jerusalem to acquit himself of his religious duties, and on his way home, sitting in his chariot, he occupied himself in reading the prophet Isaias. God, desirous to reward the good will of this pious man, sent an angel to Philip, one of the seven deacons, bidding him go to the road which led from Jerusalem to Gaza, and by which the queen's chamberlain was returning. When he came in sight "the Spirit said to Philip: Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip, running thither, heard him reading the prophet Isaias, and he said: Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest? Who said: And how can I, unless some man show me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him." Philip complied with his request, and explained to him who it was of whom the prophet foretold that He would be led "as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb without voice before His shearer, so He openeth not His mouth." Thus he declared to him the joyful tidings of Christ. "And as they went on their way," we are told, "they came

to a certain water: and the eunuch said: See, here is water, what doth hinder me from being baptized? And Philip said: If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answering, said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took away Philip, and the eunuch saw him no more. And he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts viii. 26–39.) An ancient Ethiopian chronicle records that this chamberlain propagated the Christian faith and merited to shed his blood for the truth of Christ.

The Baptism of Desire.

The Emperor Valentinian II. had reached the age of twenty years without having been baptized. He had, however, an earnest desire for Baptism. Accordingly he sent for St. Ambrose, that he might administer it to him. Before the bishop arrived at the palace the emperor was assassinated by his generals. Many of the Christians were much grieved on this account, because he had died unbaptized, but St. Ambrose, in his funeral oration, spoke to them these comforting words: "Know that already for some time he desired to receive Baptism, and had sent for me for the purpose of

administering it to him. Do you imagine that he did not obtain the grace he so ardently coveted? Most assuredly he did, for the very reason that he desired it so fervently. Just as martyrs, if unbaptized, are made clean through the shedding of their blood, so his love and his desire effected his cleansing."

The Baptism of Blood.

Before St. Emerentiana was baptized, while she was still among the number of the catechumens who were being prepared for Baptism, she was one day praying at the grave of St. Agnes, when some heathen peasants came up and began to taunt her with praying at the grave of a criminal—so they termed St. Agnes—and believing in the mythical God of the Christians. On Emerentiana rebuking them for their blasphemy and their calumnies, they grew angry and killed her on the spot. Thus this pious virgin obtained eternal salvation through Baptism in her own blood.

Confirmation.

THE grace received in Baptism needs to be confirmed and perfected, for the spiritual life must grow and increase, just as the human body must grow, and its powers be developed. For this Christ instituted a special sacrament, the Sacrament of Confirmation, that is, of strengthening or establishing. It is the sacrament whereby the faithful who have already been baptized receive the Holy Ghost and are established in the Christian faith by the imposition of the hands of the bishop, by the anointing with chrism, and by the words which are said over them.

1. The visible sign to which the grace received in Confirmation is attached is the imposition of the bishop's hands and the anointing of the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross, the bishop meanwhile saying: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

2. The Sacrament of Confirmation, like the other sacraments of the living, has the effect of

increasing sanctifying grace. The peculiar or sacramental grace it confers consists in this, that it imparts to those who have been baptized the inward, indelible mark of perfect Christians, or soldiers of Christ, thereby giving them strength to confess and practise their Christian faith and to withstand the enemies of their salvation, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Now in what does the difference between the Sacrament of Confirmation and the Sacrament of Baptism consist? Not only are the signs different, but the graces imparted and the effects produced are different. Through Baptism we are born again to a new life; in Confirmation we receive courage and power to walk conformably to this new life. By Confirmation our spiritual man is made perfect. We are thus provided anew with all the weapons which a soldier of Christ needs to enable him to stand steadfast amid temptations and persecutions, and boldly to confess the faith before all the world. "For with the heart we believe unto justice: but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. x. 10.) This strengthening we receive in Confirmation together with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost.

"Now He that confirmeth us with you in Christ, and that hath anointed us, is God, who also hath sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts." (2 Cor. i. 21, 22.)

3. In Confirmation, then, we perceive the two

things that appertain to a sacrament: the outward, visible sign, and the inward, invisible grace. That the Sacrament of Confirmation was instituted by Christ is proved by these facts:

a. That it was administered by the apostles.

b. That when administered by them it was accompanied by a supernatural effect, which Holy Scripture expressly designates as the receiving of the Holy Ghost.

c. That the Church has always taught that Confirmation is a sacrament.

It is a matter of little importance to us to know when the Sacrament of Confirmation was instituted by Christ. Had it not been ordained by Him the apostles would not have possessed the power of communicating the Holy Spirit by the imposition of hands.

The Acts of the Apostles relates that on the occasion of the persecution by Saul of the Christians in Jerusalem they were dispersed throughout the countries of Judea and Samaria, only the apostles remaining in Jerusalem. The deacon Philip went to the city of Samaria to preach Christ. When the inhabitants saw the wonders and signs that he did they believed and were baptized, both men and women, in the name of Jesus Christ. After this, we read, "when the apostles who were in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come, prayed for them,

that they might receive the Holy Ghost: For He was not as yet come upon any of them; but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost." (Acts viii. 14–17.)

Furthermore, we read in the same book that, Paul having come to Ephesus, he found certain disciples there who had only received the Baptism of John. Paul baptized them in the name of Jesus, and "when Paul had imposed his hands on them the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied." (Acts xix. 1–6.).

It is obvious from both these passages that Confirmation as administered by the apostles was a separate act from Baptism, and that it was accompanied by the imparting of divine grace.

Such has been the teaching and the practice of the Church at all times. In the early Church it is true only adults, as a rule, were baptized, and for the most part by the bishop, who confirmed them immediately after. But if it was not by a bishop that Baptism was administered, it was necessary, as we gather from the history in the Acts, that an apostle or bishop should in a certain sense complete the ceremony of Baptism by the laying on of hands.

4. The bishop is the ordinary minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation. It belongs to the office of a priest to make men Christians by Baptism, but to the bishop it appertains to make them perfect Christians. The apostles journeyed to Sa-

maria in order to lay their hands on those who had been baptized, because Philip was not empowered to do this, and because this laying on of hands is not merely a symbolical ceremony, but a true sacrament. In exceptional cases, in countries where there is no bishop and which are difficult of access for a bishop, the Holy See can empower a priest to administer Confirmation; but he must anoint with no other oils than those which are consecrated by the bishop for the purpose. These powers are not unfrequently granted by the Apostolic See to missioners who are sent to heathen lands.

5. Although the Sacrament of Confirmation is not indispensably necessary to salvation, yet if any one who might receive it should refuse to do so it would be a grievous sin on his part, since it would imply disrespect to grace. Yet it is quite justifiable, even when a bishop baptizes a child or is present at his Baptism, to postpone Confirmation until the child reaches the age of reason; for it is just at that age that he begins to be exposed to dangers and temptations, which the Sacrament of Confirmation is intended to enable him to overcome. But when adults are baptized it is well that they should be confirmed immediately afterwards, or at any rate as soon after as circumstances permit.

In order to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation in worthy dispositions the candidate must be spiritually alive; that is to say, he must be in a state of grace, for which reason he ought

previously to purge his soul from sin in the Sacrament of Penance. He must also be well instructed in the faith, and must approach the sacrament in a reverent and devout spirit. The graces received in Confirmation are greater or less according as the previous preparation has been more or less careful.

There is no rule as to age in regard to Confirmation, nor is any time specified for its administration. It can be administered at all times; in cities where there is an episcopal residence, Pentecost, or one of the days in the octave, is usually chosen, in remembrance of the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles of the Lord.

Formerly this sacrament was received fasting; but nowadays the Church dispenses from the observance of this rule, although she commends the practice.

Testimony of the Fathers.

Tertullian, one of the earliest ecclesiastical writers (240 A.D.), in his treatise on the resurrection of the body, says that the body is the bearer of salvation to us, the means whereby the work of redemption is applied to us, which could only be accomplished in the body. He then adds:

"The body is washed that the soul may be cleansed; the body is anointed that the soul may be sanctified; the body is signed with the sign of the cross that the soul may be fortified. The body

is overshadowed by the imposition of hands in order that the soul may be enlightened by the Holy Ghost. The body receives the body and blood of Christ in order that the soul may thereby be nourished."

Here Tertullian speaks of three distinct transactions, to each of which he ascribes a grace peculiar to itself: Baptism, Confirmation, and the Holy Eucharist. To Confirmation belongs the overshadowing and the enlightening of the Holy Ghost.

Another Father of the Church, St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (258 A.D.), referring to the Baptism of the Samaritans by Philip the deacon, says that the Samaritans had received a valid and ecclesiastical Baptism, and the apostles Peter and John did not baptize them again, but merely supplied what was lacking to them, in that they prayed for them, laid their hands on them, invoked the Holy Spirit and imparted Him to them. He then proceeds to say: "The same is done among ourselves when those who have been baptized in the Church are presented before the ecclesiastical superiors that by prayer and imposition of hands they may receive the Holy Ghost, and by the sign of the Lord be made perfect Christians."

St. Jerome says: "Knowest thou not that it is customary in the Church for hands to be laid on those who have been baptized, and the Holy Ghost called down upon them? Dost thou ask in what part of Scripture this is found? In the Acts

of the Apostles. And even if we had not the testimony of Holy Scripture, the consent of the whole world would have the force of law."

St. Augustine states expressly: "Confirmation is a sacrament; it has power to impart the Holy Spirit to the soul, and is as truly a sacrament as is Baptism."

Many more similar witnesses might be adduced, but none are needed, as the testimony of the infallible Church is all-sufficient.

The Ceremonies of Confirmation.

1. The bishop goes up to the altar and prays that the Holy Ghost may cleanse the candidates for Confirmation from all sin. He then turns towards them, extends his hands over them, and beseeches the Holy Spirit to grant to them His sevenfold gifts.

2. They approach the bishop; he anoints them on the forehead with chrism in the form of a cross, saying: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

The *imposition of hands* is symbolical of the descent of the Holy Ghost. The *chrism* is a mixture of oil and balm. Wrestlers and athletes used to be anointed with oil to render their

limbs more supple. *Balm* is employed to preserve dead bodies from corruption. Thus the anointing with chrism signifies that the persons confirmed receive the grace to fight as valiant soldiers for Christ, and to preserve the supernatural life of their soul from decay. And to show that they ought to confess Christ crucified openly and without fear the bishop anoints the forehead, which can be seen by all men. The Christian ought to say with St. Paul: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. i. 16.)

After the anointing the bishop strikes the person who is confirmed gently on the cheek, saying: "Peace be with thee." This is to remind him that he must for Christ's sake bear patiently contempt and persecution, for: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; he that confesseth the Son, hath the Father also." (1 John ii. 23.)

The bishop's prayer that the person confirmed may have peace is the best wish that he could express, for we know that "Christ is our peace," and by Him we have "access to the Father." (Eph. ii. 14, 18.)

Finally, the bishop gives his blessing to all those who are confirmed, extending his hands once more over them. While receiving this benediction they should keep before their minds the graces bestowed upon them in this sacrament.

Names and Sponsors in Confirmation.

It is permissible at Confirmation, as in Baptism, to take another name, to show that one has become a new man.

The rule of the Church ordains that at Confirmation sponsors shall be present, who shall present the candidates to the bishop, and during the ceremony lay their right hand on the shoulder of those who are confirmed, to signify that they are prepared to help and support them in the spiritual combat. These sponsors must, like the godparents in Baptism, be themselves confirmed; they must be of the same sex as the person for whom they stand, and be also well instructed in religion and of irreproachable life, so that they may give him a good example. The duties of godparents at Confirmation are the same as those at Baptism. Sponsorship at Confirmation, as at Baptism, creates a spiritual relationship between the person who confirms and the one who is confirmed, and also his natural parents, and between the confirmed and his godparents. Marriage cannot be contracted between any two of them without a papal dispensation; a dispensation must also be obtained if either of them be already married, or the marriage will be annulled. Religious are not eligible as godparents, because they cannot fulfil the obligations attached to sponsorship.

"There appeared to them parted tongues, as it were of fire, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost."—Acts ii. 3, 4.



"I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation."—Roman Pontifical.

CONFIRMATION.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

REFLECTION.—After we have been made children of God by Baptism, it behooves us to grow up and get strong spiritually; hence the necessity of the Sacrament of Confirmation, in which we receive the Holy Ghost with His gifts, that we may become strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Christ, able to combat and conquer the enemies of our salvation. Our passions are strong and seek to induce us to prefer what is sinful to the will of God; the world, by its evil influence and human respect, endeavors to entice us away from the path of duty, and the devil, ever on the alert, makes every effort to bring us back into the slavery of sin. We need light to enable us to know, perceive and escape these dangers, and strength to overcome our foes. It is principally in the Sacrament of Confirmation that the Holy Ghost imparts this light and this strength.

PRACTICE.—Let us often bear in mind that we have been enlisted as soldiers in the army of Jesus Christ to combat and conquer the world, the flesh and the devil, and that it behooves us to struggle bravely and unceasingly against these enemies of our soul. Let us beseech the Holy Ghost to direct us by His light in the path of virtue, and to strengthen us in time of combat with temptation, so that we may never be untrue to our profession of Christians and soldiers of Christ.

PRAYER.—Come, Holy Ghost, enlighten me, that I may know my duty to God, and strengthen me, that I may courageously perform it, so that I may ever keep the faith, fight the good fight and win the crown of life promised to those who are faithful unto death. O Mary, obtain these graces for me. Amen.

Practical Application.

1. Let us never be ashamed of our faith, but rather let us embrace every opportunity of showing ourselves to be Christians and Catholics. The good example which we give to others will serve as an encouragement to them to live up to their creed. Let us be steadfast, mindful of the Apostle's exhortation: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou are called, and hast confessed a good confession before many witnesses." (1 Tim. vi. 12.)

2. It is the duty of parents to see that their children are well prepared for Confirmation. They should not allow temporal considerations to weigh with them in the choice of godparents for them, but select persons of upright life and sound orthodoxy. They should also take care that on the day of Confirmation all is done according to rule. "As for you, let the unction, which you have received from Him, abide in you." (1 John ii. 27.)

Examples.

St. Jerome states that it was customary in his time for persons living in remote towns, who had been baptized by a priest or a deacon, to present themselves before the bishop, that he might lay his hands upon them and call down upon them the Holy Ghost.

Of St. Wilfrid, bishop of Northumbria, it is recorded that he journeyed about his diocese on horseback, "baptizing and confirming by imposition of hands."

We also read of St. Cuthbert, bishop of Hexham, that when on his travels he used to lay his hands on the newly baptized in order that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

There is not a single instance on record of a priest presuming to lay his hands on a baptized person with the idea of thereby communicating the graces of the Holy Spirit to him.

The Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

After the Saviour had infused sanctifying grace into us weak mortals in holy Baptism, and strengthened the same in us in Confirmation, He desired, of His great mercy, to give us a means of preserving and increasing that grace within our souls. This means we have in that wondrous Sacrament in which, as the Council of Trent teaches, the Lord poured out the treasures of His divine love towards mankind, at the same time instituting a memorial of His love. This Sacrament is called the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. It is one of the chief mysteries of the Christian faith, it is the fulfilment of Christian hope, the life-giving power of Christian charity.

The Sacrament of the Altar is the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ, which, under the appearances of bread and wine, is actually, truly, and substantially present for the nourishing of our souls as soon as the priest at the altar pronounces the words of consecration.

1. The Church teaches that the body and blood of Christ is actually present under the appearance

of bread and wine; that is to say, the Most Holy Sacrament is not merely a symbol of Christ—it is Jesus Christ Himself in His own person.

Christ is truly present, that is, He is here in this Sacrament, not only in so far as I believe or think Him to be here, but He is really present, whether I believe it or not.

He is substantially present, with His whole being, His flesh and blood, His body and soul, His divinity and humanity, as He was when He lived on earth and when He died upon the cross, as He now is in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father; only now He is not visible, but He is hidden under alien appearances.

In the sacrament it is true that the body and blood of Christ alone are represented; but since we know that Christ, being risen from the dead, dieth no more, we know that the soul of Christ is equally present with His body and blood. And forasmuch as the divine nature is united to the human in the person of Christ, so both His humanity and His divinity are present in this Sacrament. In virtue of His divinity Jesus Christ is omnipresent, but not in regard to His humanity; His human nature is visible only in heaven, at the right hand of the Father; on earth it is invisible, concealed in the Sacrament of the Altar.

2. It is as the food of the soul that Christ is present upon our altars. In order that this might be made evident He chose bread and wine as the outward

sign of the Sacrament. He appointed water for the matter in Baptism, to signify that in Baptism the soul was made clean, as the body is cleansed by water; and for the matter in Confirmation He chose oil, to indicate that Confirmation strengthens the soul, as oil does the body. In the same way the matter of bread and wine signifies that as the body is nourished by food and drink, so the soul is nourished in this Sacrament; and that it is as indispensable to our spiritual life and health as food and drink are to the life and health of the body.

3. This Adorable Mystery is called by many different names, some of which express what it is in itself, others the effect it produces or what it is to those who receive it.

Above all, this Sacrament is called the *Eucharist*, that is to say, *good gift*, or *thanksgiving*, because Our Lord gave thanks before He distributed it, and because we owe Him our highest thanks for this, the greatest of all gifts.

It is called the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, because it is upon the altar that the act of transubstantiation takes place; also the Holy of Holies, the Lord's Body (*Corpus Christi*), the Sacred Host, the Adorable Sacrament, the Chalice of the Lord.

And forasmuch as Christ is present in the Holy Sacrament for our spiritual sustenance, we speak of it as Communion, because by it the soul is united to her heavenly Spouse; or as the Food of the Soul,

the Lord's Supper, the Table of the Lord, the Viaticum. And in so far as it is a wondrous, supernatural food, which we ought only to receive to be in a state of angelic purity, we also call it the Bread of Heaven, the Food of Angels, the Manna of Salvation.

The receiving of this Sacrament is called communicating. In Holy Scripture the expression "breaking bread" is made use of. (Acts ii. 46.)

Types of the Blessed Sacrament.

This Sacred Mystery was instituted by the divine love, not only to be our spiritual sustenance, but also to keep ever before our minds the sacrifice of the cross, and to apply to us the graces it merited for us. We find it typified under the Old Dispensation both as food and as a sacrifice.

The types of the Blessed Sacrament under the form of food are:

1. The Tree of Life in paradise, which would have preserved mankind from physical death had it not lost paradise by sin. The Blessed Sacrament is this tree of life, whose Fruit is a pledge of eternal life, and which is restored to us by the merits of Jesus Christ.

2. The Miraculous Manna, which fell in the desert, and of which the children of Israel ate during the space of forty years. It fell daily, and

every one was allowed to gather it, but only as much as he required for one day. On Fridays twice the usual quantity fell, because the people were not permitted to gather it on the Sabbath. Ordinarily if any of the manna was kept until the following day it was found to be full of worms, and it putrefied. But what was gathered on Friday and kept until the Sabbath did not putrefy, nor were worms bred in it. With this manna the Israelites were fed until they reached the borders of the land of Chanaan. (Ex. xvi. 20, 24, 35.) After they had entered the promised land, and could enjoy the fruits of the land, the manna ceased to fall. (Josue v. 12.) Now, as this manna was no ordinary food, but miraculous, so the heavenly Manna, the Adorable Sacrament, is a supernatural food, which we receive in the desert of this life for the nourishing of our souls, until we shall behold God face to face in the celestial paradise.

3. Another type of the Holy Eucharist is to be seen in *the miraculous food which was given to Elias in the wilderness*, in the strength of which he walked forty days and forty nights unto the Mount of God—Horeb. (3 Kings xix. 8.) We, who are pilgrims here in this valley of tears, are invigorated by the Blessed Sacrament, in order that we may attain our goal, and, going on from virtue to virtue, may at length reach the holy mount, our heavenly country.

Thus the Holy Sacrament of the Altar is the

fulfilment under the New Testament of that which we find foreshadowed under the Old Dispensation.

Preparation.

The Saviour vouchsafed Himself to prepare His disciples for the reception of this exalted mystery, and to do so in such a way as to exclude the possibility of error and misapprehension.

1. First of all, Our Lord showed His disciples that He possessed the power of changing one substance into another. At the marriage of Cana He changed water into wine. (John ii. 1–11.)

2. He next proved that He was able to increase matter. This He did by the miraculous multiplication of bread on two occasions : Once he fed five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes, and there remained twelve baskets full of fragments. (Matt. xiv. 15–21.) At another time He fed four thousand men, besides women and children, with seven loaves and a few little fishes, and there remained over and above seven baskets full of broken pieces. (Matt. xv. 32–38.)

3. After the disciples and all the multitudes had, in these and many other miracles, seen the might and power of the Lord, He promised them in the plainest words that He would give them a food more wonderful than the manna in the desert, a

food which would consist of nothing less than His own body and blood. On the day following that whereon the miraculous multiplication of the loaves took place, the multitudes came again seeking for Jesus. They were desirous to make Him their king, for a king who provided food for his subjects in this fashion would be of great service to them. But Jesus said to the multitudes: "Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you." (John vi. 27.) And as they entreated Him, "Lord, give us always this bread," He said unto them: "I am the Bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. But this is the bread which cometh down from heaven: that if any man eat of it he may not die. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you, Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed; he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I

in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth Me the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live forever." (John vi. 48–59.)

Many persons murmured on hearing this, and said: "This saying is hard." From that time several of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. The Lord let them depart and asked the twelve: "Will you, also, go away? And Simon Peter answered Him: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." (John vi. 61–70.) Thus for the second time Peter made his confession of faith in the name of all the apostles, and the disciples were now prepared for the mystery.

Institution of the Blessed Sacrament.

The hour having come in which Our Lord was to enter upon His Passion, He fulfilled the promise that He had made to His disciples. It was on the day before His death, on the Thursday, that is, before Easter. That was the day whereon the paschal lamb was to be eaten, and the Saviour, with His disciples, did as the law prescribed. Afterwards He washed His disciples' feet, to teach

them humility; then, sitting down at the table, He instituted the great mystery of the New Covenant. The account of this is given by the evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke in these words:

"Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take ye and eat; this is My body, which is given for you. In like manner also He took the chalice and gave thanks, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Drink ye all of this; for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. Do this for a commemoration of Me." (Matt. xxvi. 26–28; Mark xiv. 22–24; Luke xxii. 19, 20.)

From the evangelists' narrative we learn that:

1. The Saviour took bread and wine, gave thanks, blessed them and gave them to His disciples, not as being bread and wine, but as being His flesh and His blood.

2. In order to show that He made use of no figure of speech, but that what He gave His disciples to eat was in reality what He stated it to be, He added to the expression "My body" the words, "which shall be given for you"; and to the expression "chalice" the words, "of the New Testament in My blood." There could be no question as to its being any longer bread and wine. The Saviour had changed the bread and wine into the flesh that was crucified, the blood that was shed, and given them to His disciples. A conversion of

the whole substance (transubstantiation) had taken place.

3. What was then done by the Saviour His apostles were also to do. They were to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord, and to eat and drink it, remembering that this body was given, this blood shed for them. And this was not to be done once or twice, but in perpetuity, until the second coming of the Lord.

Thus Our Lord conferred on His apostles the power to perform the same act that He had performed. And as this was to be continued throughout all time, as long as the Church shall endure, these powers were to be handed down to the successors of the apostles — the bishops and priests. In the holy sacrifice of the Mass they make use of these powers; the priest at the altar does exactly the same as Our Lord did at the Last Supper. He takes bread and wine, blesses them, pronounces the self-same words which the Saviour pronounced, and thereby changes the outward sign of bread and wine into the body of the Saviour.

That which lies upon the altar before the priest after the consecration does indeed still appear to be bread and wine; but this is not so, the accidents of bread and wine alone are there. The bread in which this change has been effected yet retains the form, the color, the taste of bread, as it had before; the wine has still the color, the smell, the taste of wine; but the substance is com-

pletely banished, so that absolutely nothing remains of the bread and wine; they have become the flesh and blood of the God-man. This doctrine is expressed in the old rhyme:

My Lord and God,
In bread and wine
Thou dost confine
Thy gift divine.
No image mere
Doth now appear,
Our Saviour dear
Is present here.
The substance gone,
Semblance alone
Of bread remains;
That form contains
Our gracious Lord,
The Incarnate Word.
This bread we see
We know to be
None else but He,
The Lord most high
To man brought nigh.

Our Lord with His whole being remains present as long as the accidents of bread and wine subsist.

4. Hence we see that the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar lacks none of the essentials of a sacrament. But it is not only the fact that in this Sacrament we receive Our Lord Himself, whereas in the others we receive His grace alone, that differentiates it from the rest of the sacraments; there is

another intrinsic difference: In the other sacraments the operation of grace is coincident with the use of matter. Water and the word of God are of no effect unless the water is poured upon the head of the person baptized. But in the Sacrament of the Altar Christ is present, whether He is received or not. As soon as the celebrant has pronounced the words of consecration over the bread and wine Our Lord is present, and He remains present as long as the species last; so that we are right in prostrating ourselves in worship before the consecrated Host.

5. Christ is not only present under each species, but under every separated part, however small, of each species, for Christ cannot be divided, it is the appearances only that are divided. The apostles broke the bread and divided among themselves the wine which Christ gave to them, and yet each one received Our Lord whole and entire, and it is said distinctly in the Acts of the Apostles that "they persevered in the communication of the breaking of bread." (Acts ii. 42.) The Council of Trent speaks as follows: "If any man denieth that in the venerable Sacrament of the Eucharist Christ is contained under each species, and under every part of each [when separation has been made], let him be anathema." (Sess. xiii. 3.)

That the body of Christ should remain indivisible when the elements are divided is a mystery which surpasses the powers of our reason to com-

prehend. The Fathers explain it by two very good comparisons. They say: One sees but a single reflection of one's face in a mirror, whether it be large or small. And if the mirror is broken one will see one's face in each and every fragment. Again, if a fire is divided, each part forms a whole fire. So it is with the body of Christ.

6. As, after the consecration, Our Lord is present under the veil of the Sacrament, and if He be not received remains present as long as the species last, a worthy dwelling-place must be prepared for Him. Consequently, in every church where the sacred Host is reserved, on one altar a tabernacle is erected, which is to serve the same purpose under the New Dispensation as the sacred tent or tabernacle did under the Old Covenant; that is, to be the dwelling-place of God among men. In this tabernacle, of which the interior is of gold or costly material, or at least draped with white silk, the sacred Hosts are kept in a ciborium. It is not allowable to keep anything besides in the tabernacle. And in order that every one who enters the church may know where the Blessed Sacrament, the Light of the world, is reserved, a light is kept continually burning before the altar, a lamp which is never permitted to go out. This lamp, which must be fed only with pure vegetable oil, must be kept burning both by day and by night, to indicate that the worship paid to the Saviour must be unceasing.

Confirmation of the Doctrine of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Corroborative testimony to the truth of the statement that Christ verily and indeed gave His body to be eaten and His blood to be drunk, and that the teaching of the Church on this point is identical with the doctrine delivered by Our Lord to His disciples, is afforded by St. Paul. He was not present at the Last Supper, for his conversion only took place several years after the death of Christ. But the Lord made known this most important event to him by revelation, and we find him writing to the Corinthians thus: "I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said: Take ye and eat: this is My body which shall be delivered for you; this do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also the chalice after He had supped, saying: This chalice is the New Testament in My blood; this do ye, as often as ye shall drink, for the commemoration of Me." (1 Cor. xi. 23–25.)

In another place the same apostle expresses this belief in other words, which admit of no misconstruction. He is warning the Corinthians against idolatry, which, being the worship of the devil, is incompatible with the reception of the Lord's Sup-

per. He adds: "I speak as to wise men [that is, to those who are well instructed]. The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread, which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (1 Cor. x. 15, 16.)

Again, when speaking of unworthy communions he utters these terrible words: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily: shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." (1 Cor. xi. 27.)

In this manner the Apostle of the Gentiles is able from direct revelation to himself to confirm the account given by the evangelists.

Testimony of the Fathers of the Church.

The testimony of the Fathers of the Church follows, without any interval of time, upon that of the apostles. The earliest witness is St. Ignatius, who was a disciple of two of the apostles—St. Peter and St. John—and who saw Our Lord Himself after the Resurrection. He succeeded the apostle Peter at Antioch, but he wrote to several other Christian communities; eight of his epistles are still extant. In his epistle to the Romans he says: "I desire no perishable food. I desire the divine Bread, the Bread of Heaven, the Bread of Life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

I desire His blood, the celestial drink, which is never-failing charity, life eternal."

St. Irenæus, bishop of Smyrna, was a disciple of St. Polycarp, who in his turn was a scholar of St. John the Evangelist. Thus from Polycarp's lips he heard the teaching of St. John. He writes: "We offer to God the bread we have blessed and the chalice we have blessed and call upon the Holy Ghost, that He may cause this oblation of bread to become the body of Christ, this wine His blood, in order that he who receives these gifts may obtain remission of sin and everlasting life."

We will not quote from the writings of Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement of Alexandria, or of any later witnesses to this doctrine, with the exception of Origen, a disciple of Clement of Alexandria, who expounded Holy Scripture with such depth and unction that his scholars thought the Holy Ghost spoke by his mouth. In a homily upon the centurion's servant he says: "When you eat this sacred, incorruptible food, when you receive the Bread and the Cup of Life, you eat and drink the body and blood of the Lord, and the Lord Himself enters under your roof. Humble yourself, therefore, like the centurion, and say with him: Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come into my house."

Instead of bringing forward any more witnesses, as might easily be done, we will lay before the

reader the testimony of the Fathers who assembled, to the number of three hundred, at the first Council of Nicea. They solemnly declared that: "We must not confine our attention to the bread and the chalice offered upon the altar, but raise our hearts upward and perceive by faith the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world, who is sacrificed upon that altar in an unbloody manner by the priest; and when we truly receive His precious body and blood we must firmly believe that this is the actual pledge of our resurrection. For this reason a small portion only is given to us to remind us that it is intended for the sanctification of our souls, not the stilling of our hunger."

Hence it will be seen that the beliefs of the early Church differed in no respect from the truths which she now teaches and which we hold steadfastly.

Refutation of Heretics.

The pride and unbelief of the different sectaries who place their opinion above the plain words of Christ, the teaching of the Church, and the conviction of Catholic Christendom, have made a miserable attempt to foist upon Our Lord's words a different meaning to that which they naturally convey to the mind. Yet those who repudiate the explanation given by the Church of the words of institu-

tion cannot agree together as to their true meaning and mutually reject each other's interpretation, thereby proving all the more clearly the necessity of an infallible authority.

Among all the various interpretations those of Luther, of Calvin and Zwingli are alone worth mentioning, for their adherents still form large bodies, although the Lutherans are fewer than they used to be, the sect being gradually absorbed into that of Calvin, whose followers are known by the name of the Reformed Church.

Luther was perfectly convinced in his own mind that the Sacrament of the Catholic Church was the true one. He fulminated against Calvin, Zwingli, and others, even calling on the secular authorities to suppress their false doctrines by the stake and the sword. Still, in his conceit and obstinacy, he persisted that although the Sacrament was the true body and blood of Christ, yet the bread and wine were present in it, the body of Christ being in, with, and beneath the bread. This was indeed the most clumsy of interpretations. Had it been true Christ would have said: "Take ye and eat, *in* this bread is My body"; whereas He expressly said: "This is My body."

Calvin and Zwingli gave out a more plausible theory. They asserted that the Saviour only intended to say: "This signifies My body." Wine and bread were only a sign, a figure of Christ's flesh and blood; the Lord's Supper was solely a com-

memorative supper, intended to remind us of Christ's death.

In contradiction to this it must be remembered that :

1. Christ, when speaking to the disciples at Capharnaum, distinctly said : " My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." And on that very account the people took scandal, because they understood the Lord's words in their literal sense, and to eat flesh with the blood in it was an abomination to them.

2. Christ declared to the apostles that that which He distributed to them was what should be given for them and what should be shed for them. Now bread and wine were not given and shed for the sins of the world, but the body and blood of Christ.

3. Nowhere throughout the whole of the Holy Scriptures do we find the word *is* employed in the sense of *signifies* unless this is explained in the context to be the case. Our Lord does, it is true, say : I am the good shepherd (John x. 11), I am the true vine (xv. 1), I am the door (x. 7); but He is the good shepherd, He is the true vine, He is really the door. And if in these forms of speech He employs a figure He explains it immediately. For instance, when He says : I am the true vine, He adds : You are the branches, and proceeds to expound the parable, as He does whenever He speaks of Himself under a figure. But in respect

to the Lord's Supper neither image nor parable is employed.

4. Our Lord undeniably says: "Do this for a commemoration of Me." We are to remember that Jesus gave His body, shed His blood for us. But bread and wine are no memorial of a man's death.

5. If the bread and wine we receive are nothing more than mere commemorative signs there can be no such thing as an unworthy communion, for one cannot commit sin in swallowing a morsel of ordinary bread and a mouthful of ordinary wine. Yet we know that the Apostle says plainly: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." (1 Cor. xi. 27.)

6. It is urged by many that it is quite inconceivable that Christ should be present under appearances which have nothing in common with flesh and blood. Furthermore, they assert it to be impossible that the whole body of Our Lord should be contained within the narrow space of the sacred Host. If this were so, they say, the body of Christ would be at one and the same time in the tabernacle on earth and at the right hand of the Father in heaven. It would be visible and invisible, to be partaken of and not to be partaken of, at one and the same time; and other similar objections. But these arguments might just as well be urged against the divinity of Christ. It might just as well be said to be impossible that God could become man, that the Word should have been made flesh and have

dwelt among us. For it might be said that the sacred humanity of Christ could not be united to His divinity, because the human body is as little commensurate with His divinity as are the accidents of bread, and no less incapable of containing within itself the infinite Godhead than the sacred Host. Moreover, when Our Lord became incarnate in the womb of the Blessed Virgin He was at the same moment present in the bosom of the eternal Father. He was then at one and the same time visible and invisible, mortal and immortal, passible and impassible. Protestants, and all who believe in the divinity of Christ, have no right to impugn the Blessed Sacrament and deny the real presence of Christ in that Sacrament. The two mysteries, that of the Incarnation and the Redemption and that of the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, must stand or fall together. Reject the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar, and the belief in Christ's divinity must go too. We know, however, that Jesus Christ Our Lord is truly God. The prophets announced this truth, angels proclaimed it, Our Lord Himself asserted it, His miracles confirmed it, God the Father attested it, the disciples certified themselves of it, the Church teaches it — consequently the Saviour is also verily and indeed present in the Blessed Sacrament, and no human wisdom can destroy the force of divine authority.

Communion under One Kind.

Since the Saviour is wholly and completely present under each kind, He is wholly and completely received under each kind; consequently the objection is unfounded which some make, that in the Catholic Church the Sacrament is administered in a mutilated form because the laity communicate under one kind.

1. At the Last Supper Our Lord instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar under both kinds, because the Sacrament was the same sacrifice which He was about to offer on the following day, and in which the blood was separated from the body. For the same reason the holy sacrifice of the Mass must be offered under both kinds, because it is the same oblation which was made upon the cross. But the act of receiving the Host, holy communion, is not a sacrifice, and therefore it is not necessary that communion should be made under both kinds. The words: "Drink ye all of it," only applied to the apostles who celebrated the holy sacrifice with Our Lord at the Last Supper. The early Christians communicated under one kind; we read in the Acts of their "breaking bread from house to house." (Acts ii. 46.)

2. It is true that Our Lord says: "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life." (John vi. 55.) But immediately after

He says: "He that eateth this bread shall live forever." (John vi. 59.) So the apostle Peter said to the lame man at the gate of the temple: "Silver and gold have I none" (Acts iii. 6), by which he meant: I have neither silver nor gold. Our Lord's words are to be understood thus: Whoso neither eateth My flesh, nor drinketh My blood cannot have eternal life. St. Paul says expressly: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself." (1 Cor. xi. 27, 29.)

3. At more solemn celebrations of holy Mass in the early churches the faithful did undoubtedly communicate under both kinds. After the communion of the bishop the deacon used to say: "Draw near in the fear of the Lord, with faith and charity." Thereupon first the men, afterwards the women, went up. The men laid the right hand across the left and received the consecrated bread in the hollow of the palm, the deacon meanwhile pronouncing the words: "The body of the Lord," and the communicants answering: "Amen." The deacon then gave them the chalice, saying: "The blood of the Lord," and the communicants again responded: "Amen." Women received Our Lord's body upon a linen cloth laid over their hands, and then His sacred blood, the deacon repeating the same words as before.

But on account of the great desire of the early Christians for frequent communion, and the im-

possibility of assisting daily at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, the faithful were permitted to take the holy communion with them to their homes and consume it in their own houses. Naturally this could only be done under the appearance of bread. A striking and indisputable proof of this custom is found in the writings of Tertullian. He is admonishing a woman who is married to a heathen to be very careful, when she communicates herself at home, not to let her husband know anything about it. "Your husband," he writes, "must be kept in ignorance concerning the food which you take before any other food; and should he discover that it is bread, on no account let him ever suspect that it is that celestial bread which we call the Lord's body."

4. In like manner the hermits, who only assembled together on Sundays for holy Mass, were accustomed to take the Blessed Sacrament with them to their cells. It used to be carried, if possible, to the captives in prison. Sick people, too, had holy communion brought them in their own dwellings. In all these cases it was received under the appearance of bread alone.

The Christians employed small caskets or boxes, which could be suspended from the neck, for the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament. When the oratory of St. Ambrose in the Vatican Cemetery was opened, the bodies of several Christians were found on whose breast lay a golden box,

Pious parents were wont to pour two or three drops of the precious blood into the mouth of their infants who were too young to swallow a morsel of bread, with the conviction that they would thereby be made partakers of Our Lord and all His divine graces.

5. On Good Friday the officiating priest receives only the sacred Host which was consecrated on the preceding day, without the precious blood. Priests also as well as laymen receive the Blessed Sacrament under one kind only whenever they receive it otherwise than while celebrating Mass; on Holy Thursday, for instance, or if it is given to them as viaticum. Under such circumstances the priest is not privileged above the layman.

6. The principal reason why the Lord's Supper was, at an early date, only administered under the one kind was to guard against the risk of accidents or desecration, which might so easily occur in the administration of the chalice. Besides, wine soon spoils; and many people do not like drinking from a cup that has passed from mouth to mouth.

At one period, however, it was compulsory upon Christians to receive communion in both kinds. It was when the sect of the Manichees arose, who repudiated wine, alleging it to be an invention of the devil. The Church then decreed that in every place where there were Manichees, or where they were suspected to be, communion should be dis-

pensed under both kinds as a protest against those heretics.

In the year 1414 the Bohemians complained of the cup being withheld from them, and began on their own authority to receive communion in both kinds. After prolonged disputes, in which recourse was had to arms, the Council of Trent granted the cup to the laity. Yet this did not induce them to return to the Church ; for it was not the Sacrament about which they cared, but to carry out their own will. In Bavaria at one time the elector, fearing lest there should be a general apostasy for the same cause, persuaded the Pope to concede the cup to the laity. At first the faithful approached the Sacrament in great numbers ; but indifference soon crept in, and the ancient practice was reverted to, without any opposition being excited.

Practical Application.

1. The presence of Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament fills us with confidence and hope. It is an elevating thought that God is among men. It is the fulfilment of the words that St. John heard a voice saying : "He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people ; and God Himself with them shall be their God." (Apoc. xxi. 3.) This it is which causes St. Thomas of Aquinas, adapting to the Blessed Sacrament the words of Holy Scripture (Deut. iv. 7), to exclaim joyfully : "There is

no people that have their God so near to them as the Christian people."

2. The presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament is the strongest foundation of our faith. A Church in which Our Lord Himself perpetually abides cannot possibly fall into any deadly errors. Of no other Church can it be said save of the Catholic Church : The Lord is with her and in her.

3. Our Lord does not make manifest His majesty in the Blessed Sacrament. On the contrary, He conceals His glory so that men may not be affrighted, as the Israelites were at Mt. Sinai when the majesty of the Lord was revealed: "Terrified and struck with fear, they stood afar off" (Ex. xx. 18) ; but the Lord wills that we should draw nigh to Him, and He invites us to approach Him in the Blessed Sacrament. The devout soul delights to tarry with her Lord, to visit Him in the tabernacle. Thence the Saviour speaks to the heart. He hears and answers prayer, imparting consolation in affliction and strength in time of temptation.

The Festival of Corpus Christi.

When, in the thirteenth century, the Waldenses and Albigenses, among other erroneous opinions, spread false doctrines concerning the Blessed Sacrament, divine Providence ordained that, in opposition to these errors, a public profession of faith

should be made by all Christendom. The will of God was made known to an obscure and pious religious named Juliana who lived near Liège. This humble and devout person had been privileged to behold in her lifetime heavenly mysteries, and great graces had been bestowed on her. In a vision she saw the full moon in its splendor, one dark spot only marring the brilliance of its orb. It was revealed to her that this spot denoted the absence of a festival which should be devoted exclusively to honoring the Most Holy Sacrament. At the same time it was enjoined upon her to tell this to the bishop, and suggest that he should celebrate such a feast with the clergy of his diocese. Another religious had a similar vision about the same time, and also a recluse of the name of Eva. The bishop approved the idea of a festival with this object as tending to promote the glory of God and the good of souls, and instituted it in his diocese. The new festival commended itself to all the faithful, and in 1264 Pope Urban IV., who had formerly been archdeacon of Liège, made it binding upon the whole Church. Since Our Saviour dwells and abides with us in this Holy Sacrament, it is meet that we should prepare a triumph for Our King and Lord, and publicly pay Him our solemn homage; and as the day of the institution of the Sacrament falls in a time of mourning, the feast of Corpus Christi was appointed to be kept on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. Thus after the

work of creation, redemption, and sanctification is completed by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and when, upon the feast of the Holy Trinity, we have rendered to the Triune God the thanks which we owe Him, it is just that with holy joy we should pay honor to the Adorable Sacrament as the centre and the sum of our life as Christians, as the source whence all graces flow. The festival is called the feast of *Corpus Christi*, the body of Christ. Like the other great feasts, it has a Mass and an office proper to it, and also an octave. It was for this day that St. Thomas of Aquinas composed the beautiful hymn *Lauda Sion*, which is recited after the epistle. At the conclusion of this sequence it is customary in some places to expose on this day the Bread of Angels in the monstrance, and give the blessing with it. After High Mass there is a solemn procession, in which the highest ecclesiastic present carries the sacred Host beneath a canopy, accompanied by the clergy. In Catholic countries this procession passes through the streets of the town or village, which are gaily decorated for the occasion. The faithful follow carrying lighted tapers, their heads bared, singing hymns and reciting prayers. In many places it is usual to erect four altars, at each of which an appropriate gospel is read. On the eve of the feast and throughout the octave evening devotions are held, during which the Blessed Sacrament is exposed.

In order to stimulate the zeal and devotion of

the faithful, Popes Urban IV., Martin V., and Eugene IV. granted various indulgences to all who should attend the services in honor of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar on the festival and in the octave.

Hymn to the Blessed Sacrament.

The world's salvation, Christ, Our Lord,
Both flesh and blood, Incarnate Word ;
His manhood pure, His Godhead's might
Are here concealed from mortal sight.

The Paschal Lamb, now slain anew,
In this blest Sacrament we view—
The Lamb who died a death of shame
Our souls from slavery to redeem.

This is true manna from the skies
That here upon our altar lies ;
The Bread of Life beyond the grave
Man from eternal death doth save.

The ark of old, the monstrance now,
The dwelling-place of God below ;
Both God and man we know to be
Beneath this sacred mystery.

How great, O Lord, that love of Thine
Shown in this Sacrament divine !
O living Bread, who eats of Thee
Is blest to all eternity.

The Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Since in Our Lord the manhood is united to the Godhead so as to form but one and the self-same Person, we worship not the divinity only but also the humanity of Christ; the latter not in itself, but only as it is united to His divinity. In Christ the manhood cannot be separated from the Godhead; therefore when we worship His Sacred Heart it is as a part of the manhood united to the divinity, and, moreover, as a symbol of His divine charity. For under this aspect the Person of Our Lord is the principal object of our veneration. The wounds of Christ are the effects of His love, and the wound of His Sacred Heart, which was pierced by the lance, is the chief of these and the most replete with mystic meaning.

Although the cultus of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was practised in the Christian Church from the earliest times, no special festival was celebrated in its honor until the seventeenth century. And as it pleased almighty God to make use of a poor religious for the introduction of the feast of Corpus Christi, so He again chose a nun, Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, of the Order of the Visitation, to whom to reveal His will regarding this new devotion. Our Lord appeared to her one day and showed her His pierced Heart, burning with the fire of charity. It was encircled by a crown of thorns and surmounted

by a cross. He said to her: "Behold the Heart that has so loved mankind, that has borne everything and spared nothing to testify its love for them. But instead of gratitude I receive from the generality of men nothing but ingratitude, evinced in their contempt, their irreverence, their unworthy communions, the coldness they manifest towards Me in this Sacrament of My love. This ingratitude is more painful to Me than all I suffered in the course of My Passion; did they show Me but a little love in return I should count as nothing all I have suffered for them; nay, were it possible, I should be ready to suffer yet more for them." Our Saviour than bade her inform the bishop that it was His will to have a particular festival celebrated on the first Friday after the octave of Corpus Christi, in order in some measure to make amends to His Sacred Heart. He also promised to pour out abundantly the riches of His grace and blessings on all who should practise this devotion. On the 6th of February, 1765, Clement XIII. gave his sanction to this feast, which was soon celebrated throughout France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Germany. Finally Pius IX. dedicated the whole Catholic Church to the divine Heart of Jesus. He also beatified the servant of God, M. M. Alacoque, who had been instrumental in propagating the devotion, and who found in it the greatest delight of her heart, inflamed as that heart was with divine charity. "Would that I could relate everything," she

was wont to exclaim, "that I know concerning this admirable devotion! Would that it were given me to disclose to all the world the treasures of grace which lie hid within the Sacred Heart of Jesus!"

> **Heart of Jesus, Victim blest,**
> **Whom the angels without rest**
> **Praise, adore, and glorify,**
> **Holy, holy, holy cry:**
> **Heart of Jesus, I will be**
> **Thine to all eternity.**

The Perpetual Adoration and Forty Hours' Prayer.

St. Ambrose says: "We now adore in the sacred mysteries that same flesh which the apostles worshipped in the person of Our Lord."

In the first ages of Christianity some pious persons associated themselves together to keep up the worship of Our Lord without intermission. About the year 400 St. Alexander founded a monastery on the Euphrates and another in Constantinople with the same object, the monks being divided into choirs, who were to take turns in reciting the divine office in the chapel by day and by night, whence the name of *Acœmetæ*, or the Sleepless Ones, was given to them. Communities of this kind spread in France more especially; the monks were divided into five, six, or seven choirs,

whose duty it was to keep up the perpetual worship. Abbot Angilbert († 814) of St. Riquier, in Picardy, gave particular directions regarding this devotion. Later on a pious lady, Catherine de Bar, known as Mother Mechtilde of the Blessed Sacrament, formed a sisterhood of good women, who led an extremely ascetic life, and made daily reparation before the Adorable Sacrament for the sins and offences committed by mankind. From the first house, which was founded in Paris in 1654, there were many offshoots in different parts of France and in other countries, and this in spite of their strict life. In Switzerland there are a considerable number of smaller cloisters in which the perpetual adoration is kept up, as at Au, near Einsiedeln.

In order to give Christian people living in the world an opportunity of taking part in this devotion, an association of the faithful was formed in the commencement of the sixteenth century in the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome for the adoration and glorification of the Most Holy Sacrament. Paul III. gave his approbation to this association under the. title of Archconfraternity of the Most Holy Sacrament, the object of which was to keep up the perpetual adoration. In Rome this devotion begins on the first Sunday of Advent in the Chapel of St. Paul in the Vatican, when the Pope himself exposes the Blessed Sacrament. Thence it is taken up by the other churches in turn, in each of which it lasts for forty

hours. In the dioceses where the devotion has been introduced the year is divided among the several parishes; during the night the perpetual adoration is carried on in religious houses. The devotion of the forty hours was originated in Rome in 1534, and was begun in Milan two years later, in memory of the forty hours during which Our Lord's body remained in the sepulchre. At first it was continued uninterruptedly, many indulgences being attached to it; later on the Holy See granted permission to continue it for three days at a time; for this the three days of Carnival were specially set apart with the object of making reparation to almighty God for the sins and excesses whereby that season was too often marked. The introduction of this devotion in general is mainly duly to the exertions of St. Philip Neri and St. Charles Borromeo. In Jesuit churches and colleges it is a standing custom.

The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar is also the perpetual sacrifice of the New Covenant. In it Christ Our Lord offers Himself up to His heavenly Father by the hand of the priest under the appearance of bread and wine in an unbloody manner, as He offered Himself upon the cross with shedding of blood.

Although this sacrifice is offered by the hand of the priest, he is not the real offerer, he is only a minister. It is Christ who is the Offerer; He is at once both Priest and Victim.

On Sacrifices in General.

1. The act of sacrifice is an essential part of divine worship, for it is an outward sign of the homage that we owe to God as the Lord of heaven and earth, from whom all good things come, an acknowledgment of our subjection to Him, a recognition of His sovereignty over all things that He has created. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." (Ps. xxiii. 1.)

This consciousness is inherent in all nations, and

therefore even heathen peoples offered sacrifices to their deities. By wholly or partially destroying the victim they signified their readiness to give it back to God, should He require it of them.

Moreover, the act of sacrifice implies a confession of guilt, a perception that reconciliation between God and man is necessary. Thus victims were slain to obtain favors from God, or in thanksgiving for benefits received or answers to prayer. From the time of Abel's sacrifice, the first sacrifice of which there is any record, the custom of offering sacrifices has been common to all religions. Among all nations, offerings of praise, sin-offerings, peace-offerings, and thank-offerings were made.

The ceremonial of worship observed by the Israelites, the chosen people of God, was minutely prescribed by God Himself. The highest act of worship was the act of sacrifice. There were oblations of blood, such as oxen, sheep, goats, doves; and bloodless ones, such as wine, milk, oil, flour, bread, incense. Flour and oil were called meat-offerings, wine and milk drink-offerings. A portion of the oblation was burnt upon the altar, the other, the major part, being consumed by the priests and those who offered the sacrifice.

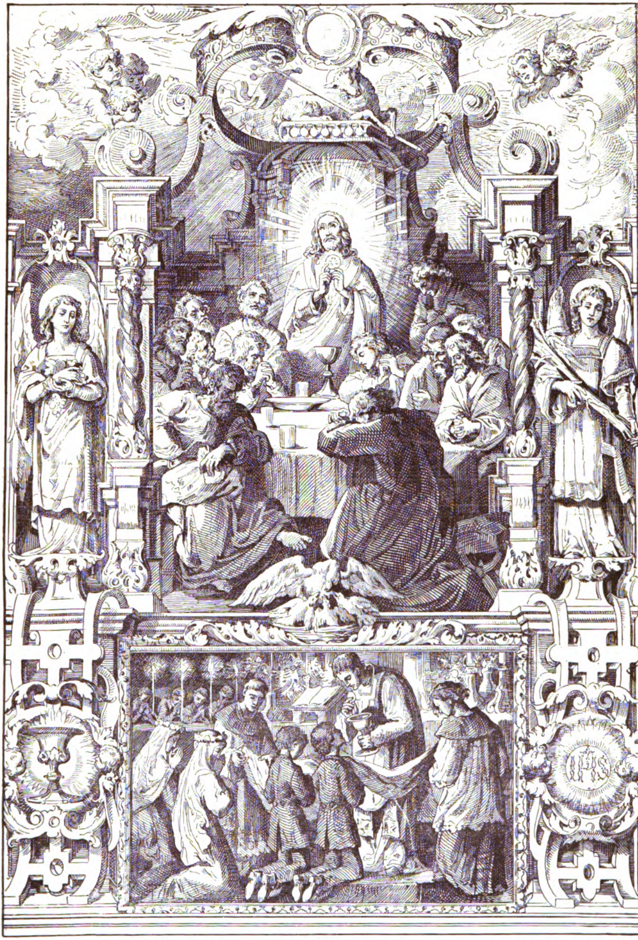
On the Sabbath Day two lambs and two measures of flour, besides a double measure of wine, were offered in the court of the tabernacle or temple; and on new moons two calves, seven lambs, one ram, with three measures of flour to every calf, two

measures of flour to the ram, and one to each lamb.

In addition to these, other days were marked by special sacrifices—the first, tenth, and fifteenth day of the seventh month—the special sacrifices being continued daily during a whole week from the fifteenth day. The altar of incense stood within the temple itself; upon this the choicest incense was burnt every day and nothing else was permitted to be burnt upon that altar. Precise directions were also given as to the sacrifices to be offered for individual transgressions, and the oblations to be made for cleansing, the fulfilment of a vow, etc.

2. The principal sacrifice of the Jews was the yearly offering of atonement on the fifth day of the seventh month. The high priest first offered a calf for himself and his own house, and a ram for a holocaust. Then two buck goats were brought; one of these was slain for the sins of the people. Upon the head of the other the priest laid both his hands, confessing all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their offences and sins, and praying that they might alight upon the head of the goat, which was then led away into the desert. The calf and the other goat, which had been slaughtered, were, with their skin and flesh, to be burnt with fire without the camp. On this day a strict fast was kept from the evening of the preceding day until the evening of the same day, and the people were to "afflict their souls." (Lev. xvi. 31.)

"Take ye, and eat, this is My body. Drink ye all of this for this is My blood."—Matt. xxvi. 26.



"Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you."—John vi. 54.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

REFLECTION.—Our Lord Jesus Christ, in giving us as the food of our soul His own body and blood, His whole self, exhausts His power, so to speak, for He cannot bestow on us a gift greater than Himself. "In the Eucharist," says St. John Chrysostom, "God has given us all that He is and all that He has." The blessed Eucharist may justly be called the sacrament of love, the pledge of God's love for us. In its institution our divine Saviour manifested His ardent desire to be united with us, to dwell within us, since He gives Himself to us as our food. He wishes to be united to us on earth, that we may be united to Him in heaven, for He makes holy communion the condition of reaching heaven. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life. He that eateth this bread shall live forever. Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." (John vi.)

PRACTICE.—Let us hunger after this bread of life; let us receive it in holy communion at least once a month, but let us do so always in a state of grace after a good preparation, and let us make a fervent thanksgiving after it. Were we to do this, we should not so easily relapse into sin, but would derive from this bread of the strong strength to conquer our passions and to lead a pure and virtuous life.

PRAYER.—O my Jesus, I have in the past so seldom and so coldly received Thee in holy communion. Give me an ardent desire for that heavenly food and the grace always to receive Thee worthily. O Mary, help me always to receive Jesus with a pure and loving heart, so that His body may be truly to me the pledge of eternal life. Amen.

All these ordinances prove that without shedding of blood no reconciliation with God was thought possible, and that the chief object of the sacrifices was to keep alive a sense of sin among the Jews. "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you that you may make atonement with it upon the altar for your souls, and the blood may be for an expiation of the soul." (Lev. xvii. 11.)

The Holy Mass Promised under the Old Dispensation.

The children of Israel performed most carefully all the outward acts of divine worship prescribed by the law; nor did they confine themselves to offering the sacrifices of obligation, but made many freewill offerings to the Lord. For instance, at the dedication of the temple, Solomon sacrificed no less than two and twenty thousand oxen and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep, and all Israel kept the feast with all solemnity for fourteen days. (3 Kings viii. 63.)

Yet as time went on the Jews fell into a fatal error. They thought that sin was remitted by the mere act of sacrifice, and that no conversion of heart, no inward sanctification was necessary. Consequently they sank deep into sin and iniquity, so that the Lord said to them by His prophets: "To what purpose do you offer Me the multitude

of your victims? I am full; I desire not holocausts of rams, and fat of fatlings, and blood of calves, and lambs, and buck goats. Incense is an abomination to Me; the new moons, and the Sabbaths, and other festivals I will not abide; your assemblies are wicked." (Is. i. 11, 13.) "If you offer Me holocausts and your gifts, I will not receive them." (Amos v. 22.)

On the other hand, the Lord announced by the mouth of the prophet Malachias that the sacrifices of the Old Testament were to be done away with and a new oblation substituted for them. "From the rising of the sun even to the going down My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation." (Mal. i. 11.)

In these words it is distinctly foretold that when the sacrifices of the Old Testament should cease, a new sacrifice should take their place. This oblation is a clean, that is, a bloodless sacrifice, consequently a meat-offering. It is not offered once, like the sacrifice of the cross, but in every place. This oblation is none other than the holy sacrifice of the Mass. The Mass is the only sacrifice which is offered in every place, for the Catholic Church alone extends over the whole globe. And forasmuch as no other body of Christians has a sacrifice, no other body of Christians but the Catholic Church alone can claim to be the Church of Christ.

Types.

As the Blessed Sacrament under the form of food is foreshadowed under the Old Dispensation, so we find it also foreshadowed as a sacrifice.

1. Melchisedech's oblation is one of the types of the Most Holy Sacrament, even as Melchisedech himself is a type of Christ. We read that this priest-king brought wine and bread to Abraham when he was returning from battle to refresh him and his followers. He blessed Abraham, saying: "Blessed be Abram by the most high God, who created heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, by whose protection the enemies are in thy hands." (Gen. xiv. 18–20.)

In like manner Christ offers Himself to His heavenly Father in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and by the hand of the priest blesses those who take part in this sacrifice. Thus David sang when, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, he foresaw and acknowledged the Son of God, the future Messias, to be the true high priest of the New Covenant: "The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent: Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedech." (Ps. cix. 4.)

2. Another and a very evident type is the paschal lamb, which was slain as a memorial of the exit of the Israelites from Egypt. Shortly before their exodus the Lord commanded a lamb to be

slaughtered, a male of one year without blemish. It was to be roasted with fire and eaten at night, no portion being left until the morning. The children of Israel were to eat it with loins girded, with shoes on their feet and staves in their hands. That night was the *Phase*, or Passover, for the destroying angel of the Lord went through the land of Egypt and slew every first-born, from man unto the cattle. But he passed over the houses of the Israelites, for the door-posts were sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb. (Exod. xii.) In commemoration of this event, every year, on the fourteenth day of the first month, a lamb was to be slaughtered, a male free from all blemish. Christ is the paschal lamb of the New Covenant, sinless and spotless, through whose blood we are redeemed, and who gives Himself to us for our nourishment in an unbloody manner. And as the paschal lamb was to be eaten with unleavened bread, so Christians must keep the Easter festival in stainless purity, obeying the exhortation of the Apostle: "Purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new paste, as you are unleavened. For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed." (1 Cor. v. 7.)

Institution of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

At the Last Supper Christ Our Lord not only gave Himself to His disciples to be eaten, but at

the same time He offered Himself up to His heavenly Father under the appearances of bread and wine.

1. The act Christ performed at the Last Supper was identical with that which He performed on the following day, excepting that it took place without shedding of blood. On the following day it was in all respects a sacrifice, as the Saviour Himself indicated when He said: "This is My body, which shall be given for you. This is My blood, which shall be shed for you." (Luke xxii. 19, 20.)

2. With the words: "Do this for a commemoration of Me," He commissions His apostles to do that in future which He Himself did. Consequently they were not only to receive their Lord, but to offer Him in sacrifice. This is done in holy Mass, the priest being the instrument Our Lord employs to make the oblation of Himself to His heavenly Father.

And truly Christ immolates Himself for us in holy Mass in the self-same body which He took of the Virgin Mary and which was sacrificed upon the cross. He thereby places His Incarnation, His life on earth, above all His death upon the cross, before His heavenly Father, beseeching Him to apply the fruits of this redemption to us whom He has redeemed, and to whom He also gives that same body, which was slain, for our spiritual sustenance.

This sacrifice is therefore the same in substance

with that which was offered upon the cross; it differs from it only in the manner of offering and in the measure of its efficacy.

On the cross the sacrifice was offered by the immolation with the shedding of blood of the Paschal Lamb—Christ, that is, being put to a violent death, a death which He consented to undergo for love of God and man. But in holy Mass the sacrifice consists not in a fresh immolation of the Victim, but in the renewal, without bloodshed, of the oblation of our Paschal Lamb, Christ the Lord, who was slain upon the cross and brought to life again by His Resurrection. In the sacrifice of the Mass Christ, by pleading for us, gives us a share in the divine graces which He merited for us painfully and efficaciously by the sacrifice of the cross.

In the sacrifice of the cross Christ Our Lord purchased for us once for all the grace of redemption. In the sacrifice of the Mass He dispenses this grace to each one of us individually, according to what we severally need and deserve.

The sacrifice of the Mass does not in the least derogate from the value of the sacrifice of the cross; on the contrary, it is its greatest glory, since from the sacrifice of the cross the sacrifice of the Mass derives all its dignity and all its efficacy.

The Vicarious Office of the Priest.

In celebrating holy Mass the priest is the representative of Christ, for it is in virtue of His authority and by use of His words that the priest changes bread and wine into flesh and blood.

1. The unworthiness of the priest who offers the holy sacrifice of the Mass does not in the slightest degree diminish its value, although the harm he does to his own soul is immeasurable. For the priest does not officiate in his own name, but in the name of Jesus Christ, and the sacrificial Victim is none other than Jesus Christ Himself, the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased.

2. In celebrating holy Mass the priest is also the representative of the Church, for he offers Christ to our heavenly Father in the name of the Church, and he presents to Him the Church together with Christ. Christ is the price paid for the Church's ransom, and the Church is Christ's mystical body. Therefore the Church can no more be separated from Christ than Christ can separate Himself from the Church. Now whatever the Church offers to God she offers to Him through the ministry of the priest. In holy Mass the Church offers to almighty God all the prayers and pious practices, all the conflicts and sufferings, of her children militant here on earth who are in a state of grace; she offers besides all the patience, all

the longing desires, of her suffering children and all the merits, all the glory, of those of her children who are made perfect in heaven.

3. Holy Mass is a sacrifice of praise, an oblation of homage and thanksgiving. Christ, in His office of High Priest, adores His heavenly Father. He came to earth in obedience to the will of His Father in heaven, which He taught mankind to fulfil upon earth. This adoration is in reality an act of thanksgiving, as we are told Our Lord "gave thanks" at the Last Supper before He broke bread. (Luke xxii. 19.) The Church gives expression to these sentiments pre-eminently in the *Gloria*, when she places these words on the lips of the priest: "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we adore Thee; we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty."

The holy sacrifice of the Mass is also a peace-offering. It takes the place of the sacrifices of the Old Testament, which were also peace-offerings. David, at the time of the pestilence, erected an altar and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings that the plague might be stayed from the land. (2 Kings xxiv. 25.) So the Church addresses herself to the Father of heaven, beseeching Him to preserve us from all evils and to give us all things that are needful for the welfare of our souls and of our bodies. The priest says: "Mercifully

grant peace in our days, that by the assistance of Thy mercy we may be always free from sin and secure from all disturbance."

The holy sacrifice of the Mass is a sacrifice of atonement. In it we receive grace to stir us to contrition and to penance, and thus we obtain pardon of venial sin and remission of the temporal punishment due to sin. For the holy Mass is the renewal of the sacrifice upon the cross of the Paschal Lamb, who taketh away the sins of the world.

4. The holy sacrifice of the Mass is offered to God alone. This is a matter of course, for Christ offered Himself to none other than His heavenly Father, and there is no one else who can bestow upon us the graces we implore. Thus the celebrant says: "Accept, O holy Father, almighty, eternal God, this immaculate Host, which I, Thy unworthy servant, offer unto Thee, my living and true God." "We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the chalice of salvation, beseeching Thy clemency that, in the sight of Thy divine majesty, it may ascend with the odor of sweetness, for our salvation and for that of the whole world."

Consequently when the expression is used, "A Mass in honor of St. Joseph," or any other saint, we mean that we honor God in His saints, who have become what they are through His grace; and also that we choose the saint in whose honor we have a Mass said as our particular patron and in-

tercessor. In this manner from the earliest times the names of some of the principal saints have been introduced into the canon of the Mass, before the consecration in fact, and immediately after the mention of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, such as SS. Peter and Paul, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon and Thaddeus, Linus, Cletus, Clement, Xystus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Chrysogonus, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian. And after the consecration these are the names of the martyrs held in universal honor : John the Baptist, Stephen, Matthias, Barnabas, Ignatius, Alexander, Marcellinus, Peter, Felicitas, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, and Anastasia.

In honoring these we do the very thing David exhorts us to do when he says: "Praise ye the Lord in His saints."

The Fruits of Holy Mass.

The whole Church is benefited by the fruits of the holy sacrifice of the Mass, both the living and the dead, nay, even the angels and saints in heaven.

1. The living profit by holy Mass inasmuch as by it they obtain all that furthers their salvation, all they hope for and ask of God.

2. The departed gain the satisfaction made

therein for their sins, the cancelling of their debt, and consequently release from purgatory and admission into heaven.

3. The angels and saints also profit by holy Mass, since their merits are united to the merits of the sacrifice of Christ, and God is thereby glorified. We also give thanks to almighty God for the graces and glory He has granted to the angels and saints; and we spread devotion to them on earth by the grace we obtain to walk in their footsteps.

It has, however, always been the belief of the Church that the holy sacrifice of the Mass could be applied to individuals. From the most ancient formularies we find that Mass used to be said for particular persons; nor was it said once only, but repeatedly, for the self-same person and for the self-same intention. This is true of the departed above all, the holy sacrifice being celebrated for them not only on the day of death, but also on the third, the seventh, and the thirtieth day after, as well as on the anniversary of their demise. And from the foundation of the Church up to the present day it has been customary at any period of calamity, in time of pestilence, war, scarcity, earthquakes, and the like, to hold solemn public worship, of which the holy sacrifice of the Mass formed the central act.

Those who benefit by the more special fruits of the holy sacrifice are:

1. The priest who celebrates the Mass. The

more worthy the priest the greater the graces he receives, for in every Mass he prays for himself.

2. The person or persons for whom the Mass is offered, whether present or absent, and also those who desire to be prayed for in the Mass. The fruit of the holy sacrifice can be applied especially to the souls of the faithful departed, by way of intercession, since the Church, the stainless bride of Christ, turns to her divine Spouse, imploring grace and mercy for the holy souls which have been specially commended to her prayers.

3. All persons who assist at the holy sacrifice. The Church expressly prays thus: "Be mindful, O Lord, of all here present, whose faith and devotion are known to Thee." Besides, by their presence at and the part they take in the holy sacrifice the faithful manifest their faith and their confidence in the help of God. "Every high priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err: because he himself also is compassed with infirmity." (Heb. v. 1, 2.)

The holy sacrifice of the Mass must not, however, and in fact cannot, be publicly offered for any who are not members of the Church.* Not only

* Holy Mass cannot be offered for the intention of non-Catholics, nor can their names be given out in

does this rule exclude unbelievers and the unbaptized, but also those who are known to be heretics and schismatics, consequently all adherents of any sect, or excommunicate persons. As they are cut off from the body of the Church, they cannot partake in the spiritual life of the Church.

4. In the early ages of Christianity the faithful were accustomed to offer bread and wine at holy Mass for the celebration of the holy sacrifice; at a later period they brought oblations of oil and articles of food as well, and money too, for the support of the priest. Later still the money used to be given to the priest in person, with the request that he would offer the holy sacrifice. Thus it was that the custom arose of giving the priest a stipend for the Mass. It is not in reality paying for the Mass, it is only a contribution towards the maintenance of the priest, and, as the Apostle tells us, the workman is worthy of his meat. The priest who takes money for Masses is bound under sin to offer them for the desired intention.

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public in the church to be prayed for. But this does not prevent Catholics from having Mass said for their non-Catholic relations or friends, whether living or dead. On the contrary, it is a great act of charity to do so.

Holy Communion.

THE reception of the body and blood of Christ is called communion, which means union with another. In it Our Lord unites Himself to the soul. This union is intended to change, as it were, our being into the being of Christ; to inform and animate us with the life of Christ, that is, with sanctifying grace and with divine charity, as He Himself tells us: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me." (John vi. 58.)

1. The obligation to receive holy communion is not merely an ecclesiastical precept, it is a divine command, for Our Lord says: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you." (John vi. 54.)

2. Nothing more is necessary, in order to comprehend aright how infinite a treasure we possess in holy communion, than to observe the effects it produces in those who receive it in the spirit of Christ and with a holy longing to be united to Him.

Holy communion maintains and augments in us the love of God and sanctifying grace.

We receive also, by actual grace, strength to practise all Christian virtue and perfection.

Holy communion is the most effectual means of weakening the force of evil propensities and defending us against temptation. We are cleansed from venial sin and preserved from mortal sin. By holy communion all Christians grow together into one spiritual body. The germ of immortality and the promise of a blissful resurrection are implanted in the body, and a pledge and foretaste of eternal life are given to us. Thus after the administration of holy communion the Church places these words on the lips of the priest: "O Sacred Feast, in which Christ is received, the memory of His Passion is renewed, the soul is filled with grace, and a pledge of eternal life is given to us."

3. It stands to reason that a worthy communion alone produces these marvellous operations of grace in the soul; the results of an unworthy communion on the soul of the sinner are awful indeed.

Unworthy communion renders the soul still more unfit for the influence of divine grace. The concupiscences of the flesh are stimulated. The mind is darkened, the heart hardened. The soul is brought yet more under the dominion of the devil and we incur the penalty of everlasting death.

The immense responsibility which the unworthy communicant takes upon himself is expressed by

the Apostle in these words : "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily: shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord." (1 Cor. xi. 27.)

4. In order to prevent such a sacrilege from being committed he adds the admonition : "But let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice." (1 Cor. xi. 28.) The proving of one's self here spoken of consists in purifying one's self from mortal sin before approaching holy communion. He who knows himself to be guilty of mortal sin must receive the Sacrament of Penance. It is not enough to be contrite on account of sin, however great one's contrition ; sacramental confession is indispensable if it can possibly be had. Furthermore, acts of faith, hope, charity, gratitude, humility, and fervent desire should be made. The more thoroughly the soul is cleansed and the more it is animated by true devotion the greater will be the effects of grace produced by holy communion.

5. The Church commands that the person who is to receive the Blessed Sacrament must be fasting —that is to say, nothing at all must have been taken since midnight. Therefore if one has tasted even a few drops of water or any other beverage, or has eaten anything, even the smallest morsel of food, he must not go to communion that day. Exception to this rule is only made in the case of those who are dangerously sick, to whom holy com-

munion is given by way of viaticum. But sick persons generally who receive the Blessed Sacrament from devotion must take nothing beforehand, not even a drop of medicine.

This rule, which St. Augustine tells us was universally observed in his day, and to the existence of which the writings of Tertullian afford undeniable testimony, was not laid down by the Church without good reason. Primarily it was intended to guard against the occurrence of scandals such as the Apostle Paul complains of in the first epistle to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. xi. 21.) It is, moreover, fitting that the Blessed Sacrament be received before any common food or drink has passed the lips. Finally, it is to show us that, in accordance with Our Lord's admonition, the Christian ought to seek first the kingdom of God and His justice.

6. The outward man ought to correspond, by personal cleanliness, respectable clothing, and devout behavior, to the inward purity and reverence wherewith the Blessed Sacrament is to be received. We must go up to the holy table without gloves, our hands folded, our head bent down; we must take the communion-cloth in our hand and hold it to our breast, then raise our head, at the same time casting down our eyes, open our mouth, slightly advance the tongue upon the under lip, close our mouth immediately after receiving the Blessed Sacrament, and swallow it reverently as soon as it is sufficiently moistened.

After communicating we should spend at least a quarter of an hour in prayer, adoring Our Lord, who is present within us, giving thanks to Him, offering ourselves to Him, and imploring His grace and blessing. The day of communion should be spent, as far as possible, in religious exercises and good works, and all gratification of the senses or amusements of a dangerous tendency should be carefully avoided.

Practical Application.

When present at the holy sacrifice it is well to follow the Mass as far as one can, and unite one's self to the action of the priest, rather than to occupy one's self with different devotions. Now the priest offers an oblation, recites prayers, and receives holy communion, therefore the laity can and ought to do the same. As the priest offers up the Son of God in sacrifice for us, so the Christian ought to make an offering of himself, to adore the Word made flesh, and to receive the Blessed Sacrament. As, however, it is not possible to communicate sacramentally every time one hears Mass, we can at least communicate spiritually—that is to say, we can awaken in ourselves a desire, a fervent longing, for holy communion, and beseech Our Lord, who is present under the sacramental veil, to come and dwell in our hearts by His grace. This spiritual communion will receive its completion at the

conclusion of the Mass in the blessing given by the priest.

Spiritual communion can, moreover, be made without any limit as to place. When the bell which is rung at the consecration is heard the Christian can awaken in his soul the desire to receive his Lord. The laborer in the fields, the artisan in the factory, the sick man on his bed of pain, each and all can say within themselves: "How happy should I be, O my Lord, if I could now adore Thee in Thy temple and receive Thee sacramentally! But do Thou at least come and enter into my heart and abide with me, that the darkness may not gather round my soul. Graciously hear me, be merciful unto me! Amen."

The Worship of the Early Christians.

It can be clearly proved that the manner of celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass was from the first in all essentials the same as it is now. The Apostle Paul writes: "We have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle." (Heb. xiii. 10.) Now every one knows that in the Christian religion there is not, and never has there been, any sacrifice but the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

Justin Martyr gives a description of the manner of celebrating Christian worship in his time: "On

the prayers being ended the kiss of peace is exchanged. Then bread, together with a cup containing wine and water, is given to the bishop. Taking it in his hands, he gives praise and glory to the Father in the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and recites an expressive prayer of thanksgiving for the gifts bestowed on us. At the conclusion of this prayer the people answer aloud: Amen, i. e., so be it. Thereupon the ministers, whom we call deacons, distribute the bread, the wine and water, that has been consecrated by the giving of thanks, to all present, and they also carry it to those who are absent. This food we call the Eucharist; none may partake of it except those who have been baptized for the forgiveness of sins and the inheritance of eternal life, and who live in accordance with the precepts of Jesus Christ. For we do not receive this as if it were common bread or common drink, but, as Jesus Christ by the word of God was made man, and took human flesh and blood for our salvation, so, we are taught, this food, which by change of substance is the nourishment of our spiritual life, through the command expressed in His words, becomes the body and blood of the God made man. For the apostles in their writings, which are called the gospels, tell us that Jesus Christ commanded them to do what He did; that, after He had taken the bread and given thanks, He said to them, Do this for a commemoration of Me: this is My body. Likewise, after

He had taken the chalice and given thanks, He said: This is My blood, and gave it to them all."

It is curious to observe how the very same prayers which the priest now recites at the altar are to be found in the most ancient liturgies or orders of divine worship. We will give a few prayers taken from the oldest liturgy, that of the apostle James, who for twenty-nine years was bishop of Jerusalem. They are as follows: "Send upon us and upon these Thy proposed gifts, Thy most holy Spirit, that, coming upon them with His holy and good and glorious presence, He may hallow and make this bread the holy body of Thy Christ, and this cup the precious blood of Thy Christ."

At the breaking of bread, while the priest holds the one half of the sacred Host in his right hand and the other in his left, and dips in the chalice that which he holds in his right hand, he says: "The communion of the most holy body and blood of Our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. It hath been united and sanctified and accomplished in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, now and ever." The celebrant then continues: "Behold the Lamb of God, the Son of the Father, sacrificed for the life and the salvation of the world." The thanksgiving runs thus: "We give Thee thanks, Christ Our God, that Thou hast vouchsafed to make us partakers of Thy body and blood for the remission of sins and eternal life."

Hence it will be seen that the prayers appointed for the celebration of holy Mass in the early Church coincide not merely in their meaning, but in their very wording, with those in use at the present time ; thus they afford unquestionable proof of the truth of the Catholic doctrine concerning the holy sacrifice of the Mass. All sects, moreover, who have separated themselves from the Church, with the exception of Protestants, agree on this point with the Catholic Church. The Greeks and Russians, the Armenian, Syriac, and Chaldaic Christians all do so. They all prostrate themselves before their God hidden under the semblance of bread, and adore Him as their Lord.

The Secrecy Observed in the Celebration of Holy Mass and the reproaches raised against the Early Christians.

THE early Christians took the greatest care to conceal the doctrine as well as the celebration of the holy mysteries from pagans and even from catechumens. This was done out of reverence and awe ; also as a precaution, to prevent the uninitiated and uninstructed from being present at divine worship, which would have given rise to misconceptions and brought down on them persecution. They were well aware that the teaching of the cross was unto the Jews a stumbling-block, unto the Gentiles foolish-

ness. Accordingly it was never mentioned in the presence of Jews or Gentiles, and even the catechumens who were desirous of being baptized, and who were admitted to Christian instructions, were obliged to leave the church after the first part of the Mass was ended, before the offertory. The doctrine of the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar and of the holy sacrifice of the Mass was not expounded to them until after their Baptism. On this subject St. Cyril of Jerusalem says: "When catechumens are present we do not speak of the holy mysteries in a manner that they can understand; we are often compelled to make use of enigmatical language, which the faithful who are duly instructed will comprehend, but which awaken no suspicions in the mind of the uninstructed." It certainly would not have been necessary to use these precautions had the matter in question been merely a commemorative feast, at which common bread and wine were partaken of.

In spite of all it was impossible to prevent reports respecting the worship of the Christians becoming prevalent, that which took place being most grossly misrepresented. Terrible charges were brought against the Christians. It was alleged that they offered human sacrifices, drank the blood of their victims, killed and ate young children. The hatred felt for Christians grew to such a pitch that the Emperor Nero thought himself safe in burning Rome and accusing the Christians of the

crime. The Christians themselves would endure any torture, or death itself, rather than raise the veil of mystery wherewith they shrouded their sacred rites. It is recorded in the Acts of the Martyrs that St. Blondina when questioned concerning the fabulous crimes attributed to the Christians gave as her only answer: "I am a Christian, and nothing shameful is done among us." In regard to the accusation of eating human flesh she said: "How can it be imagined that we should be guilty of such a crime, who from a spirit of mortification abstain from partaking even of ordinary meat?" How easily the Christians might have refuted these charges by saying: That of which we partake is nothing more than a little bread and a little wine. But this would have been considered an act of treachery, and they therefore held their peace, and allowed anything to happen to them rather than disclose the lofty mysteries of religion to the uninitiated. This necessity for concealment is the reason why so little is said by the early Christian writers about the holy sacrifice.

The Requisites for the Celebration of Holy Mass.

It stands to reason that in the most sacred act of worship every detail should be minutely ordained and determined, nothing being left to the discretion or pleasure of the minister. The commands

of the Church are precise and must on no account be overstepped. In the same manner under the Old Dispensation almighty God Himself gave instructions to Moses as to how everything was to be made; not the temple itself alone, but also the sacerdotal vestments and the vessels to be used in divine worship. The third book of Moses contains these divine regulations. On this account it is called *Leviticus*, the book of the Levites or ministers.

Ecclesiastical Furniture and Sacred Vessels.

The holy sacrifice of the Mass may only be offered upon an altar. Even the heathen perceived that it was meet to have a special place for sacrifice and built altars; these were certainly at the outset of the simplest description, mounds of earth or piles of wood. We read that after the deluge Noe built an altar unto the Lord and offered holocausts upon the altar. (Gen. viii. 20.) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did the same. (Gen. xii. 7, xxvi. 25, xxxi. 54.) In the temple at Jerusalem there were two altars of sacrifice: the altar of burnt-offering in the court, the altar of incense in the sanctuary.

In his epistle to the Hebrews the Apostle Paul speaks expressly of the altar of the New Covenant: "We [Christians] have an altar whereof they have no power to eat who serve the tabernacle [the Jews]." (Heb. xiii. 10.) The first altars of the

early Christians were nothing more than simple wooden tables. In the Church of St. John Lateran, where the head of St. Peter is preserved, the small wooden table upon which the prince of the apostles offered the holy sacrifice in the catacombs of Rome is enclosed within the high altar. In this same church may also be seen the table of cedar-wood on which Our Lord instituted the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. In order to escape from their pagan persecutors the early Christians were compelled frequently to change the place where the holy sacrifice was offered, so that it was only when the Church enjoyed peace that permanent altars could be thought of, of a less inartistic and more ornate description. Ecclesiastical rules were then drawn up to regulate the construction of the altar, as well as concerning the celebration of divine worship in general.

The altar-table must consist of a single slab of stone with a smooth surface. In the centre and at the four corners a cross, the four arms of which are of equal length, must be carved on it. Relics are placed in the altar as a memorial of the custom in the first ages of the Church of raising the altars over the tombs of martyrs. If there are several altars in one church the one which stands in the choir is called the high altar, the others are called side altars. It is of ancient usage in the Latin Church to have several altars in the house of God. In the catacombs of Rome there are chapels exca-

vated in the walls, containing two, three, or even more altars. The high altar is raised upon three steps to indicate that to the Triune God all glory and all sacrifice belong. The altar is consecrated by the bishop with special ceremonies; this consecration does not always take place in the church; more often a slab of stone is consecrated, in which relics are placed and sealed up, and which is anointed with chrism with the appointed prayers. This stone is afterwards let into the altar exactly in the centre, where the chalice stands and the Host is laid at the time of Mass. These altar-stones are sometimes enclosed in small tables, which can be folded up and are called portable altars. Missioners make use of them when travelling on foreign missions, and army chaplains in the camp; they are also employed when an immense concourse of people renders it necessary to erect an altar in the open air.

A crucifix is to be set upon the altar, large enough to be visible from a distance, in order to remind the faithful that the same Victim is sacrificed here in a bloodless manner which was immolated to the Lord upon the cross with shedding of blood. On each side of the crucifix there must be at least one wax candle, both of which are lighted at Mass. For High Mass there must be at least four in use, and during exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at least six lighted candles, for which reason six candlesticks stand, as a rule, on the high altar. The

candles must be of pure beeswax, because wax is the purest combustible produced by nature; their white color is significant of innocence. The light they shed is symbolical of the presence of Him who speaks of Himself as "the Light of the world."

The altar must be covered with three linen cloths, one above another, to guard against desecration of the precious blood, should the celebrant have the misfortune to let any drops fall.

Three cards stand upon the altar: one, the largest, in the middle; the others, one on the left, the other on the right side. The Church requires the priest to utter every word distinctly and according to prescribed rules, on account of which he always has the Missal before him and reads the prayers from it. On the altar-cards are inscribed certain prayers which he cannot read from the Missal without inconvenience. On the one in the centre are the *Gloria*, the *Credo*, the offertory prayers, the prayer before the elements are blessed, and Our Lord's words of institution, printed in large characters. The card on the epistle side contains the prayer when the water is blessed and the 25th Psalm, which is recited by the priest while he washes his fingers. The card on the gospel side contains the beginning of St. John's gospel, which is, as a rule, read at the conclusion of holy Mass. All this shows us how careful and conscientious the priest should be in clearly articulating every word of the Mass.

Upon the high altar stands the tabernacle, which is so called because it is the antitype of the Jewish tabernacle, the dwelling-place of God among men. "Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them. And they shall be His people: and God Himself with them shall be their God." (Apoc. xxi. 3.) The tabernacle is the most sacred spot upon earth. It is the place where Christ miraculously dwells. It is the seat of uncreated wisdom, the glorious ark of the New Testament, the tower of strength, the abode of Him who is the pledge of salvation and of life eternal, the tent God pitches among men, the new heaven upon earth, whereat the angels gaze in amazement.

Seeing this to be so, the greatest care ought to be expended upon the tabernacle, both as to the interior and the exterior. The exterior should be of artistic workmanship. One often sees it adorned with a design of corn and grapes, in gold or silver, to remind us of the appearances beneath which Our Lord is hidden. On each side of the tabernacle are often figures of angels adoring, above it a pelican feeding her young with her own blood, while upon the door the paschal lamb is frequently represented. The interior ought to be draped with white silk or cloth of gold, a white linen corporal being spread out below. The key of the tabernacle ought to be gilt. In cathedrals the tabernacle is generally not upon the high altar,

but on a side altar, because the bishop is frequently obliged to sit while performing episcopal functions at the high altar.

Before the tabernacle the perpetual light must be kept burning. This lamp, which must be fed with a vegetable oil, is to show that on the altar before which it hangs the Light of the world is Himself present.

The principal vessels used in the holy sacrifice are the chalice and the paten. The chalice is the cup for the sacrificial wine which is to be changed into the blood of Christ. The Jews made use of the chalice in their sacrifices, for David says: "I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord." (Ps. cxv. 4.) And of Our Lord it is said explicitly that having taken the chalice He said: "This is the chalice," etc. (Luke xxii. 20.) The rubric requires that no other vessel be used but a chalice, and that it should be made, if possible, of one of the precious metals. Pious Catholics have presented at all times to the Church valuable chalices of gold richly chased and adorned with jewels. Even in the poorest churches the chalices must be of metal and have a silver-gilt lining. The paten, also, a round plate upon which the consecrated Host is laid, must be of metal and gilt. The chalice may be regarded as an emblem of the sepulchre of Our Lord, and the paten as the stone placed at the entrance of the sepulchre. Both chalice and paten

must be consecrated by the bishop with chrism according to the form prescribed in the Pontifical; a priest has not the power to consecrate them.

The corporal, which accompanies the chalice, is a square linen cloth whereon the chalice stands and the Host rests. It is marked with a small cross on the upper surface, because the sacred Host must always be laid on the same spot. The corporal represents the winding-sheet wherein Christ's body was wrapped by Joseph of Arimathea. When not in use the corporal is kept in the burse, a case covered with the same material and of the same color as the chasuble. During Mass the chalice is covered with the pall, a small square of linen stiffened with cardboard, lest anything should fall into it. From the commencement of Mass until the offertory, and again after the communion, the chalice is covered with the veil, which also resembles the chasuble in color and material. For cleansing of the chalice and wiping the priest's hands after the communion the purificator, a small linen cloth, is used. In some places the priest, when taking a few drops of water from the cruet to pour into the chalice, makes use of a small spoon which is kept in the chalice at other times.

Although the ciborium and the monstrance cannot be classed among the sacred vessels required for the celebration of holy Mass, we shall still speak of them here. The ciborium, or pyx, serves for the reservation of the sacred Hosts which are

required for communion, especially for the communion of the sick. This vessel must be of metal, the cup at least, and gilt inside. The Blessed Sacrament is in some places exposed to the veneration of the faithful in the ciborium during public prayers or the minor services of the Church, such as the Saturday devotions, etc.

On the occasion of solemn expositions, or when the Blessed Sacrament is carried in procession, the sacred Host is placed in a kind of shrine made for the purpose, and called a monstrance, because in it the Adorable Sacrament is shown to the people for their veneration. This is done, for instance, on the feast of Corpus Christi and during the exposition of the forty hours.

The Ecclesiastical Vestments.

The priests of the Old Testament, when officiating in their sacred functions, wore splendid vestments, of which the material, the shape, the color, the ornamentation, were minutely prescribed by God Himself. The priests of the early Church had not, perhaps, very gorgeous vestments, but they had special festive garments for their sacerdotal functions, because what has once been used in divine worship cannot be put to the ordinary uses of every-day life. At an early date the Church not only appointed the vestments that were to be worn,

but attached to each a mystic meaning. This could not be otherwise when the great dignity of the priest is considered, and the solemnity and sanctity of the act he is empowered to perform. The several vestments which the priest puts on for the celebration of holy Mass, and which must all be duly consecrated, are these :

1. The *amice*, or humeral, a linen cloth laid upon the shoulders in order to cover the neck.

2. The *alb*, a tunic of white linen reaching from head to foot, such as was worn by the priests of the Old Law. (Ezech. xxviii. 4.) This denotes the innocence and purity that ought to distinguish the priest who ascends to the altar ; it also recalls the seamless coat for which the soldiers cast lots at the foot of the cross. It is held in round the waist by the *girdle*, which represents the cords wherewith Our Lord was bound.

3. The *maniple*, once worn by all ministers, is now worn only by those who have received sacred orders, and in a much smaller size, so as to be a mere ornament. It is to remind the wearer that he must not shrink from arduous labors in the service of God. The maniple is of the same material and color as the chasuble.

4. The *stole* was originally the uppermost garment. It was white, embellished at the edge with a border of some other color. It is now only a narrow band, placed round the neck and crossed over the breast. Deacons wear it over the left

shoulder ; subdeacons may wear the maniple, but not the stole. The stole is the distinctive mark of official authority, on which account a priest must not, except when saying Mass, wear it in the presence of the bishop without express permission. It signifies the robe of original innocence which man lost at the fall. The priest must wear a stole when performing any ecclesiastical function, such as baptizing, marrying, hearing confessions, etc.

5. The *chasuble*, the distinctive vestment for Mass, was originally a round cloak, with an opening through which the head was passed, the front part resting on the arms, so as to give the hands free play. As it covered the whole body, this vestment was called *casula* or chasuble (a hut). The shape being very inconvenient, the server was obliged, whenever the priest genuflected, to hold it up, whence comes the custom of raising the chasuble at the time of the consecration, although it is now of a more manageable form. The chasuble is intended to signify the sweet yoke of Christ (Matt. xi. 30), which the priest is bound to take upon him and to follow his Master. For this reason there is often a cross upon the back of the chasuble.

When the deacon and subdeacon attend upon the priest at Mass they are vested in the dalmatic in place of the chasuble ; it is a festive garment formerly worn by persons of superior station, and brought from Dalmatia, whence the name dalmatic is derived.

If any other priest besides the deacon and sub-deacon is in attendance upon the celebrant he wears neither chasuble nor dalmatic, but a *cope*. This vestment is also worn by the priest in other solemn functions, such as solemn vespers or processions of the Blessed Sacrament.

When a bishop celebrates Mass he wears several things distinctive of his office. He has *sandals*, or particularly handsome shoes, for he is the preacher of the Gospel, and to him are applied the words of the Apostle : "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things." (Rom. x. 15.) He wears a *ring*, because he is espoused to the Church, of which he is one of the guardians ; he wears *gloves* to denote the force of his blessing. As a pastor of Christ's flock he carries a *crozier*, while the *mitre*, the head dress of a prelate, marks his supremacy over all the clergy who are subject to him.

The Ecclesiastical Colors.

From the time when vestments, as distinct from ordinary garments, were appointed to be used in divine worship certain colors were also fixed for them, varying with the day or season, as an outward sign of the sentiments that ought to inspire the worshipper. The Church makes use of five colors : white, red, purple, green, and black.

White is the color of innocence and of joy. It is used on the feast of the Holy Trinity, on festivals of Our Lord, of the Blessed Mother of God, of the angels, and of all saints who are not martyrs. Likewise at the consecration of a church, the ordination of priests, the consecration of bishops, and similar festivals.

Red is the color of fire and of blood. It is the Holy Ghost who kindles the fire of divine love in the hearts of men; accordingly red is used at Pentecost, on the feasts of the Finding and Exaltation of the Holy Cross, the feast of the Five Wounds, etc. It is also used on the feasts of the holy apostles (with the exception of St. John), and of the holy martyrs, who shed their blood for the faith of Christ.

Purple, or violet, is symbolical of humility and penance. It is used in Advent and in Lent, on, ember-days (with the exception of the ember-days at Whitsuntide, which fall within the octave of Pentecost, when red is used), on vigils, for penitential processions, and on all occasions when a penitential spirit is required—for instance, in the administration of Extreme Unction and the Sacrament of Penance.

Green betokens hope—the hope of eternal life, which Christ the Lord has once more brought within our reach. It is used on all Sundays and week-days from the octave of the Epiphany to Septuagesima, and from the third Sunday after

Pentecost until Advent, unless the Mass is of some feast.

Black is the sign of mourning, and is used in Masses for the dead, on Good Friday, and All Souls' Day.

Not unfrequently black vestments are embroidered with white. This is to signify that the holy souls in purgatory, for whom we pray, are in a state of grace, and are certain to be admitted to the joys of heaven when their period of expiation is at an end.

The Ceremonies of Holy Mass.

The service of the Mass is composed of a series of ceremonies, which precede the sacrificial act, accompany it, and bring it to a conclusion. These ceremonies are calculated to impress the faithful with a sense of the dignity of the holy sacrifice, to increase their devotion, to prepare them for sacramental or spiritual communion, that so they may receive more abundantly the fruits of the holy sacrifice, and may implore the divine mercy for this end. None of them are without significance; all have a deep meaning, and no priest is allowed to deviate from them in the slightest degree, even to the very smallest detail; one priest must do precisely the same as another. For this reason the Missal contains the most minute directions, and

these every priest is bound to follow exactly by virtue of obedience. The Reverend Father Martin von Cochem, writing on this subject, says: "Sixteen times the priest signs himself with the sign of the cross. Six times he turns to the people. Eight times he kisses the altar. Eleven times he raises his eyes to heaven. Ten times he strikes his breast. Fifty-four times he folds his hands. Twenty-one times he bends his head. Seven times he bows down slightly. Eight times he bends low. Thirty-one times he blesses the elements with the sign of the cross. Twenty-nine times he lays both hands flat upon the altar. Fourteen times he prays with arms outstretched. Thirty-six times he prays with folded hands. Seven times he lays his joined hands upon the altar. Nine times he lays the left hand only on the altar. Eleven times he places his left hand upon his breast. Eight times he raises both hands to heaven. Eleven times he prays silently. Thirteen times he prays aloud. Ten times he covers and uncovers the chalice. Twenty times he moves from one side to the other of the altar. Besides these three hundred and fifty movements he has one hundred and fifty more ceremonies to observe; and no less than four hundred rubrics have also to be followed. Every priest, therefore, who offers holy Mass according to the Roman rite has no less than nine hundred things to perform, whereof not the smallest or least important must be neglected or omitted."

The principal ceremonies are the sign of the cross, lifting up of the hands in prayer, raising the eyes to heaven, genuflecting, striking the breast, elevating the sacred Host and the chalice, and in solemn functions the use of incense. The sign of the cross reminds us of the sufferings and death of Our Redeemer, on which we rest all our hope for mercy, grace, and salvation. The Apostle tells us that in this sign should be our greatest happiness and glory: "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ." (Gal. vi. 14.) The same Apostle admonishes his disciples to lift up the hands in prayer: "I will therefore that men pray in every place, lifting up pure hands without anger and contention." (1 Tim. ii. 8.)

In raising the eyes to heaven the example given by Our Lord is followed: "He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples." (Matt. xiv. 19.)

Again, when Christ took the deaf and dumb man aside He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting touched his tongue, and, looking up to heaven, He groaned and said to him, Ephpheta, which is: Be thou opened.

Bending the knee was customary under the Old Dispensation. Esdras says of himself: "At the evening sacrifice I rose up from my affliction, and having rent my mantle and my garment, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands to

the Lord my God." (1 Esdras ix. 5.) And when St. Paul was departing from Miletus he called together the ancients of the Church and gave them good admonitions, and "when he had said these things, kneeling down, he prayed with them all." (Acts xx. 36.)

We read that the publican struck his breast, saying: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke xviii. 13.)

The elevating of portions of the victim was commanded under the Old Law: "And taking out of the basket of unleavened bread, which was before the Lord, a loaf without leaven and a cake tempered with oil, and a wafer, he put them upon the fat and the right shoulder, delivering all to Aaron and to his sons. Who having lifted them up before the Lord, he took them again from their hands and burnt them upon the altar of holocaust. . . . And he took of the ram of consecration the breast for his portion, elevating it before the Lord, as the Lord had commanded him." (Lev. viii. 26–29.)

The use of incense was also commanded by the Mosaic law: "Thou shalt make also an altar to burn incense, of setim-wood." (Ex. xxx. 1.) This altar was overlaid with the purest gold. (Ex. xxxvii. 26.) It was the lot of Zachary to burn incense upon the altar. In the revelations given to St. John the Evangelist he saw "an angel come and stand before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense

that he should offer of the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel." (Apoc. viii. 3, 4.) The use of incense is symbolical of our prayers, which we desire to ascend as incense to heaven. At the same time incense is a fitting expression of the worship due to the most high God.

The Language in which Holy Mass is Celebrated.

Originally the apostles celebrated holy Mass in the language of the country where they preached the Gospel, in the vulgar tongue, that is, of the people. In apostolic times Greek was the language commonly spoken in Palestine, Syriac and Greek in Syria, where St. Peter first labored, Coptic or Greek in Egypt, and Latin in Italy. Hence we have Greek, Syriac, Coptic, and Latin liturgies dating from the earliest ages of Christianity. But when, as time went on, these languages were altered or developed, the Church allowed no change in the language of her liturgies, but retained jealously these ancient, time-honored witnesses to her teaching, justly shrinking from any alteration, however slight. Thus it comes that in those countries in which Mass was originally said in the vernacular

the language then in use is no longer the vernacular. The missionaries who carried the Gospel to distant lands introduced their own liturgy among their converts. Consequently in all countries the language of our liturgy is no longer the language in present use, but that formerly spoken by the people, and no longer understood by all. However, it never occurred to any one to consider this as a defect; on the contrary, the possession of the ancient liturgies was regarded as being of the greatest importance, as affording sure proof that the doctrine was preserved in all its purity. From Rome, the capital of Christendom, the Latin language spread to other lands, being brought by the Church's delegates to the nations which they subjugated to her sway. The advantages arising hence are obvious:

1. It prevents the possibility of a different sense becoming attached to a word in the course of time, and disputes arising as to its true signification.

2. Unity is the greatest treasure of the Church. The use of Latin in the Mass binds together all Christians who owe allegiance to Rome, and affords them what they most value, the opportunity of joining in the celebration of the holy sacrifice in whatever country they may be. If a German Protestant goes to England and attends the Anglican service, unless he understands English, he is completely at sea; whereas the Catholic, let him go whithersoever he will, finds Mass celebrated

in exactly the same manner; where there is a Catholic priest he is no stranger, and he feels himself at home in the church, whatever his country and his mother tongue may be.

3. These words of the Apostle: "In the Church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor. xiv. 19), are often quoted against this usage of the Church. But from this very passage it is evident that the Apostle does not refer to the holy sacrifice of the Mass, since he only speaks of instruction, or preaching. Now sermons are everywhere delivered in the vernacular. Holy Mass is, however, no instruction, nor is it offered by the people, but the priest offers it for the people, and prays for the people, and it is by no means indispensable that they should understand every word he utters. Every Catholic knows what is going on, and can accompany the action of the priest with prayers of his own. He is familiar with the Mass, for he has been carefully instructed concerning it, and can follow it, uniting himself in spirit to the priest. Besides, prayer-books containing a translation of the Mass are within reach of every one.

That in the passage quoted above from the epistle to the Corinthians preaching alone is referred to is quite evident from the context. St. Paul goes on to give this admonition to the brethren: "When you come together, every one of you

hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a revelation, hath a [foreign] tongue, hath an interpretation: let all things be done to edification. If any speak with a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and in course, and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him hold his peace in the church, and speak to himself and to God." (1 Cor. xiv. 26–28.) In these words the Apostle does not prohibit speaking in other tongues when instruction is given—he permits it, provided there be one present who can interpret, but only in moderation.

Non-Catholic religious communities have no occasion to attack the use of the Latin language in the celebration of Mass. They have sermons, hymns, prayers for their adherents in the vulgar tongue; the Catholic Church provides exactly the same for her children. Who is not acquainted with our beautiful prayers, our litanies, our hymns? In addition to these, however, there is in the Catholic Church a sacred act of worship, which, in order to unite all the faithful around a common altar, is celebrated in a language with which most educated people are conversant. With parts of this service all the faithful are familiar. It is impossible for any one to deny that the Catholic has in the worship of his Church a treasure of far higher value than any other so-called Christian can boast.

The Ceremonial of Low Mass.

The priest who is about to celebrate holy Mass, prepares himself duly by the recital of certain prescribed prayers; then having vested, he goes to the altar, his biretta on his head, and in his hand the chalice and the paten, on which is the sacrificial offering of bread in the shape of a wafer, both being covered with the veil. A server, who represents the people, walks before him, to serve the Mass. Originally clerks, i.e. clerics who had received minor orders, filled this office, but as the number of priests and of churches increased, and more Masses were said, the laity were admitted to serve Mass, boys being generally chosen, the preference being given to those who distinguished themselves by their piety and good behavior.

On reaching the altar, the server takes the biretta from the priest's hand; the priest ascends the steps and places the chalice upon the altar. Standing with hands joined together before the middle of the altar, he calls to mind the intention for which he is going to offer the holy sacrifice, and the person to whom its fruit is to be applied. He then descends the steps, and commences the first or introductory portion of the Mass, at which in early times non-baptized persons might be present. This introductory part consists only of prayers and instructions—what was most wanted, therefore, by

those who were being prepared for reception into the Christian Church.

PRAYERS AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR.

The priest, standing at the foot of the altar, signs himself with the sign of the cross, saying: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This is to show that all which he does is done to the glory of the triune God.

He next recites the 42d Psalm, in which is formulated the desire for comfort and assistance in distress and affliction, as well as the confidence that they will be given. In the holy sacrifice of the Mass the afflicted will find their greatest consolation, their strongest encouragement.

But both priest and people are poor, weak, sinful mortals; accordingly the celebrant himself, and the congregation by the mouth of the server, make confession before God and all the saints of their sinfulness in the general confession (*confiteor*). On the prayers which are said at the foot of the altar being ended, the priest goes up to the altar, within which are some relics, and lays his hands upon it. He prays for the forgiveness of sins through the merits of the saints, and in token of the love he bears them he kisses the altar, as the tomb where their remains are deposited.

THE INTROIT.

Going to the left side of the altar, the priest reads the *introit*, or entrance. This is generally a verse

taken from Holy Scripture, expressing the sentiments wherewith those who hear Mass should be animated on that particular day. A verse from one of the Psalms is added, emphasizing the one that precedes it. For instance, the introit for the first Sunday in Advent runs thus: "Unto Thee I have lifted up my soul ; O my God, in Thee do I trust ; let me not be put to shame, neither let mine enemies mock me ; for all they that wait for Thee shall not be confounded. Show me, O Lord, Thy ways, teach me Thy paths." To this is added the ascription of praise: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost ; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be."

The priest returns to the middle of the altar, and recites

THE KYRIE.

(Lord, have mercy). This entreaty is addressed three times to God the Father (*Kyrie eleison*), three times to God the Son (*Christe eleison*), and three times to God the Holy Ghost (*Kyrie eleison*), who is Lord together with the Father and the Son.

The priest, although conscious of his sinfulness, confidently believes himself to have received the grace of forgiveness, and accordingly recites

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO.

"Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good will. We praise Thee, we bless Thee,

we adore Thee, we glorify Thee, we give Thee thanks for Thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, Thou who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us; Thou who takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayers; Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Jesus Christ, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen."

Thus the priest gives thanks to the triune God and adores His majesty. Turning to the people, he says: *Dominus vobiscum* (The Lord be with you). The people answer: *Et cum spiritu tuo* (And with thy spirit). The people pray that the priest may be enlightened, so that he may ask what is in accordance with the will of God.

THE COLLECTS,

or orisons, follow next. Collect means collection, or gathering together; the prayers of the faithful being collected and presented all together by the priest to God Almighty, in the hope that they will be heard and granted through the merits of Jesus Christ (*per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum*), through whom we receive all the blessings that are bestowed upon us. The collects, which often con-

sist of several prayers, are recited at the left side of the altar.

THE EPISTLE

is then read—a portion of Scripture, taken from the Old Testament or from the writings of the apostles, containing some admonition or instruction. For this the people, in the person of the server, return thanks; the words *Deo gratias* (Thanks be to God) being said at the conclusion. The priest returns to the middle of the altar and prepares to read

THE GOSPEL.

He first prays for grace to proclaim it worthily and aright. The gospel (good tidings) is read at the right side, the epistle at the left side, of the altar, for the gospel declares the word of God Himself, while the epistle only publishes the words of His messengers. At the beginning of the gospel, which is preceded by the usual salutation, *Dominus vobiscum*, both priest and people make the sign of the cross. The people stand up to signify their readiness to follow the teaching of Christ. At the conclusion the priest kisses the book, and the server answers: *Laus tibi, Christe* (Praise be to Thee, O Christ).

THE CREDO.

The Creed, or Confession of Faith, is said on Sundays and many feasts, especially on the festivals

of Our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin. It is the profession of faith compiled at the Councils of Nice and Constantinople, and is recited by the celebrant to bear witness that he holds the same beliefs as the Doctors and Fathers of the Church. This closes the introductory part of the Mass, and the Mass proper begins. It has three divisions.

I. The Offertory.

The priest, standing at the middle of the altar, spreads out the corporal upon it, and taking the paten in his hand, he raises it a little and offers up the bread to almighty God, praying Him meanwhile to accept this sacrifice for the forgiveness of his innumerable sins, offences, and negligences, and those of all faithful Christians, both living and dead, more particularly of those who are present at the Mass. The Host is then placed upon the corporal.

The priest next pours wine into the chalice, mixing with it a small quantity of water. This mingling of wine and water signifies the union of the Godhead of Christ with His sacred humanity. It also reminds us of the blood and water which issued from the side of Our Lord. The priest elevates the chalice, as he did the paten with the Host upon it, and beseeches the eternal Father to accept and bless this oblation of the chalice. Then going to the epistle side, he washes his fingers, in order that the oblation of the bread, which he will have

to touch, may not be defiled in any way: this ceremony is likewise intended to denote the stainless purity of heart wherewith we ought to assist at the holy mysteries. Standing at the middle of the altar, the priest bows down, and again implores the Most Holy Trinity to receive this sacrifice in remembrance of the Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, in honor of Blessed Mary and of all the saints. Then turning towards the people, he calls upon them to pray with and for him, saying:

ORATE FRATRES.

"Brethren, pray that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God the Father Almighty." The priest calls the people "brethren," as was customary in the early Church, since all the redeemed are in reality the brethren of Jesus Christ. He makes use of the expression "my sacrifice and yours," because all who are present unite in offering one common sacrifice.

THE SECRETA,

or secret prayers, come next. They are the same in number as the collects before the epistle, and are in fact an amplification of them. These prayers have special reference to the subject brought before our minds by the festival of the day. For instance, the *secreta* for the feast of the Ascension is as follows: "Receive, O Lord, the

gifts which we lay before Thee in honor of the glorious Ascension of Thy Son, and mercifully grant that we may be delivered from present dangers, and arrive at everlasting life." As in all prayers, so in the *secreta*, the priest proffers his petitions in the hope that they may be granted through Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, world without end (*per omnia sæcula sæculorum*). Amen.

In view of the graces he hopes to receive, the priest gives praise and thanks to God, calling upon the angels to join with him in the jubilant strain, while he says to the people: *Sursum corda* (Lift up your hearts).

The people answer: *Habemus ad Dominum* (We have them lifted up to the Lord).

The priest continues: *Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro* (Let us give thanks to the Lord Our God).

The people answer: *Dignum et justum est* (It is meet and just).

THE PREFACE AND THE SANCTUS

are then recited by the priest. The preface is a hymn of praise. There are eleven different prefaces; they vary according to the festival or season. The one generally said, the leading idea of which is the same as of all the others, runs thus: "It is truly meet and just, right and salutary, that we

should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, holy Lord, Father Almighty, everlasting God; through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Through whom the angels praise, the dominations adore, and the powers fear Thy majesty; the heavens also, and the virtues of the heavens, and the blessed seraphim glorify it in common exultation. With whom we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst command our voices also to be admitted in suppliant confession, saying: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory: hosanna in the highest. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord: hosanna in the highest."

II. Canon of the Mass.

The second principal part of the holy sacrifice of the Mass is the Canon, i.e., the rule according to which holy Mass is to be celebrated. It comprises the part from the *Sanctus* to the *Pater noster*.

The faithful have been duly prepared by confession of faith and by prayer; the oblations have been presented, and now the priest beseeches almighty God to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of His Son. At the same time he prays for the Catholic Church, for the Pope, for the bishop, and particularly for the persons for whom the Mass is said, "whose faith and devotion are known (to God)." The intercession and help of the saints are also entreated: that is, of the

Blessed Virgin Mary, of the twelve apostles, and of twelve other saints, among whom are the early popes. "By whose merits and prayers God grant that we may be always defended by the help of His protection."

THE CONSECRATION.

The most solemn moment of all now comes. The priest extends his hands over the oblation, blessing the bread and wine three times, and then each species severally, saying: "Which oblation do Thou, O God, vouchsafe in all things to bless, sanction, approve, ratify, and make acceptable; that it may become to us the body and blood of Thy most beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Who, the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands, and having lifted up His eyes towards heaven to Thee, O God, His almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee, did bless, break, and give to His disciples, saying: Take, and eat ye all of this; *for this is My body.*"

After pronouncing these words of consecration, the priest, kneeling, adores the sacred Host; he elevates it, so that it can be seen by the people, who likewise adore it; then placing it upon the corporal, he again genuflects, and proceeds thus: "In like manner, after they had supped, taking also this excellent chalice into His holy and venerable hands, and giving thanks to Thee, He blessed, and gave it to His disciples, saying: Take

and drink ye all of this; *for this is the chalice of My blood of the New and eternal Testament; the mystery of faith, which shall be shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.* As often as ye do these things, ye shall do them in remembrance of Me."

While pronouncing the last words the priest bends his knee, adoring the most precious blood of the Lord; he elevates the chalice, and again genuflects after he has replaced the chalice upon the corporal.

AFTER THE CONSECRATION.

The prayer of the priest and of the people has now been granted, and Our Lord is present upon the altar, as He was present with us during His life on earth, only now under the species of bread and wine. The priest prays that this great sacrifice may be pleasing in the sight of God, and that as many as participate in it may be filled with His heavenly benediction. First of all he pleads for the holy souls, particularly those for whom he offers the holy sacrifice, "that the Lord may grant to them that rest in Christ, a place of refreshment, light, and peace." Then, striking his breast, he prays for "us sinners"; he beseeches God to give us some part in the fellowship of the saints. "Into whose company we beseech Thee to admit us, not considering our merit, but freely pardoning our offences."

While reciting these prayers the priest makes

the sign of the cross both on himself and over the body and blood of the Lord. Thereby he reminds himself continually that the sacrifice of the Mass is a renewal of the sacrifice of the cross.

At the conclusion of the Canon, the celebrant, taking the chalice in one hand and the sacred Host in the other, elevates them, as if he would lay the Son of God in the arms of His heavenly Father, for "through Him, and with Him, and in Him is to Thee, God the Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen." Herewith the Canon, or second part of the Mass proper, ends.

III. The Communion.

The communion is the receiving of the body and blood of Christ; it is the sacred feast of love. Before consuming the consecrated elements the priest recites the *Pater noster;* it is the giving thanks before partaking of the feast of love. At the conclusion of the *Pater* he breaks the Host into three pieces, two larger and one smaller; the latter he puts into the chalice containing the precious blood. The breaking of the Host is to signify that Christ was broken, i.e., slain for us upon the cross. The mingling of the two elements of bread and wine denotes that the body and blood belong to one another, and that after Our Lord's Resurrection His blood was reunited to His body. "May this mixture and consecration of the body and blood of

Our Lord Jesus Christ be to us that receive it effectual to eternal life. Amen."

The priest then implores mercy of the divine Lamb, the Victim upon the altar. He strikes his breast three times, saying: "Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us." This he repeats three times, the last time ending with the words "give us peace," for peace with God and man is the greatest of all mercies.

Before the priest ventures to consume the body and blood of the Lord, he prays that this participation may not turn to his judgment and condemnation, but may be to him a safeguard and remedy both of soul and body. Then taking the Host in his left hand, he strikes his breast three times, saying, in the words of the Roman centurion: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed." Blessing himself with the two halves of the sacred Host, he says further: "May the body of Our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen."

After receiving the Lord's body, he genuflects, saying: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all He hath rendered unto me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. Praising, I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies." Then, making the sign of the cross upon himself with the chalice, he says: "May the blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ

preserve my body and soul to life everlasting. Amen."

A little wine is then poured into the chalice—not the slightest portion of the sacred species should be left,—and after this has been consumed by the priest, wine and water are poured over his fingers. While taking these ablutions, he says: "Grant, O Lord, that what we have taken with our mouth we may receive with a pure mind; and of a temporal gift it may become to us an eternal remedy." "May Thy body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy blood which I have drunk, cleave to my bowels; and grant that no stain of sin may remain in me, who have been refreshed with pure and holy sacraments."

As before the offertory a verse from the Psalms formed an introduction to the holy sacrifice, so this third part of the Mass closes with a passage taken from Holy Scripture.

POST-COMMUNION.

Again the priest turns to the people with the salutation: "The Lord be with you" (*Dominus vobiscum*, and with the words: *Oremus* (Let us pray), invites them to give thanks with him for the graces they have received. These acts of thanksgiving are of the same number as the petitions before the epistle. Afterwards he turns again to the people, and announces to them: *Ite, missa est* (Go, the Mass is ended). The server answers: *Deo gratias*

(Thanks be to God), and the priest blesses the people in the name of the almighty and triune God.

In conclusion, the beginning of St. John's gospel is read. When a feast falls on a Sunday, the gospel of the feast is read before the Credo, and the gospel for the Sunday at the end of the Mass. At the close of the gospel the server does not answer: *Laus tibi, Christe*, as before, but *Deo gratias*, for he gives thanks for all the graces that have been given in the holy sacrifice.

In Advent and Lent, and on all the days when purple vestments are worn—the rogation-days, for instance—the Mass is slightly altered. The *Gloria* is omitted, because the sentiments suited to the day are those of contrition rather than of joy. For the words *Ite, missa est*, *Benedicamus Domino* (Let us bless the Lord) are substituted, because at such times the devotions of the faithful ought to be prolonged.

In Masses for the dead the *Gloria* is naturally omitted, and *Requiescat in pace* (May they rest in peace) is said in the place of *Ite, missa est.* The Benediction is also omitted.

Pontifical Masses vary in some points from the ordinary Mass, to mark the greater dignity of the celebrant. The most noteworthy difference is that the bishop, as the successor of Our Lord, does not address the salutation *Dominus vobiscum* to the faithful the first time, but employs the words Christ

spoke to the apostles when He appeared to them after the Resurrection: *Pax vobis* (Peace be with you). When giving the benediction at the close of Mass he makes the sign of the cross upon the people three times; when High Mass has been celebrated, he wears his mitre and holds the crozier while giving the blessing.

The devout Catholic should endeavor to follow the service of the Mass throughout as closely as possible. He should present his petitions with those of the priest, give thanks when the priest gives thanks, adore when the priest adores, cross himself when the priest makes the sign of the cross, and do all to the glory of God and of His holy Church.

The Sacrament of Penance.

THROUGH the mercy and loving-kindness of Our God it is not merely in holy Baptism that we have the means of regaining the divine grace which was lost at the fall; in His compassion He stretches out to us a helping hand to enable us to rise up again when, after Baptism, through human frailty we commit sin. A healing bath is provided for us that we may wash away in the blood of Christ the stains we have contracted and may be again reconciled with God. This is done in the Sacrament of Penance.

The Sacrament of Penance is that sacrament in which the priest, as God's representative, remits our sins, provided we have heart-felt sorrow for them, make a sincere confession, and form a true purpose of amendment and satisfaction.

1. By penance is understood in Scripture the change of evil and perverse dispositions and a corrupt manner of life, and consequent amendment. This is what is otherwise called conversion. "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish." (Luke xiii. 3.)

Under penance is also understood the punish-

ment which we inflict upon ourselves to expiate the sins we have committed, and thereby manifest our repentance before God. Thus St. Peter said to Simon the magician: "Do penance from this thy wickedness." (Acts viii. 22.)

Penance consists first and foremost in this, that the sinner should be conscious of and acknowledge or confess his sins. Recognition of sin and avowal of sin is the foundation of all real conversion.

2. Remission of sin is promised by God to all who are truly penitent. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unjust man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to Our God: for He is bountiful to forgive." (Is. lv. 7.)

3. Although no mortal man, but God alone, has power to forgive sins, yet God has vouchsafed, in order to comfort and reassure the penitent sinner, to grant this forgiveness of sins through His representative, and to endow this representative with supernatural powers. For this reason He gave to the apostles and their successors the power to forgive sins. On the very day of His Resurrection, on the evening of Easter day, He appeared to His disciples, when the doors were shut, and commissioned them to carry on the work which His Father had sent Him to accomplish, saying: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them, and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins

you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (John xx. 21–23.)

The apostles and disciples were in this wise appointed judges, and power was given to them to retain or remit sins. They were not merely authorized to declare that God would remit sins, they were actually to remit them. And for as much as not only did the faithful commit sin in the days of the apostles and first disciples, but at all times sin is committed as the consequence of human frailty, this power abides permanently in the Church, being granted to the successors of the apostles.

4. In the Sacrament of Penance all sins can be remitted, however numerous and however heinous they may be, provided only that the conditions under which absolution can be given, sincere sentiments of contrition on the part of the sinner, are not wanting. "If the wicked do penance for all his sins which he hath committed, . . . living he shall live, and shall not die. I will not remember all his iniquities that he hath done." (Ezech. xviii. 21, 22.)

Thus no man need despair of forgiveness. The greatest of sinners can have recourse to his Redeemer in the Sacrament of Penance. "There shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance." (Luke xv. 7.)

5. In the Sacrament of Penance we also obtain remission of the penalty due to sin which we can-

not ourselves expiate here, i. e., the eternal punishment. Oftentimes the temporal as well as the eternal penalty is remitted, in part at least. Furthermore the merit of good works, lost through mortal sin, is recovered. "God is not unjust, that He should forget your work, and the love you have shown in His name, you who have ministered and do minister to the saints." (Heb. vi. 10.)

Moreover, together with sanctifying grace we receive actual grace to enable us to persevere in amendment, consolation, strength, peace, and joy of heart in the Holy Ghost.

The Sacrament of Penance is also beneficial, and the frequent reception of it is much to be recommended to those who are not guilty of mortal sin, because through it the soul acquires an increase of grace and is made capable of greater perfection.

6. The Sacrament of Penance is indispensable to the forgiveness of mortal sin. For this sacrament is, among all other means of grace, the one principally appointed to restore those who have fallen, to the state of grace. On this account the Fathers of the Church call it the second plank after the shipwreck, by means of which every one, even be he burdened with many and grievous crimes, can be rescued from the whirlpool of mortal sin as from a shipwreck, and reinstated in the grace and friendship of God.

And as God does not require of man more than he is able to perform, and there are cases in which it is absolutely impossible to receive the Sacrament

"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."—John xx. 23.



"Thy sins are forgiven thee."—Luke vii. 47.

PENANCE.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

Reflection.—Baptism cleanses the soul from original sin and from all actual sin previously committed. For the remission of the sins committed after Baptism our divine Saviour, in His infinite mercy, instituted the Sacrament of Penance, and made the priests of His Church the judges of the sins of men, when He breathed on His apostles, saying: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (John xx. 22, 23.) We must confess our sins, that the priest may know what sins we have committed, whether we are sorry for them and firmly resolved to avoid them, and to repair the injury we have done, so that he may thus be able to judge whether we are really deserving of pardon. "If we confess our sins," says St. John, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all iniquity." (1 John i. 9.)

Practice.—Let us not live in mortal sin even for a single day, lest death overtake us unawares in that fearful state. If we have the misfortune to fall into a grievous sin, let us at once go to confession, lest we die in it and be lost. We ought to go to confession as often as may be necessary to preserve us altogether from falling into mortal sin, for the Sacrament of Penance is also a preservative against sin.

Prayer.—O my God, I should have long ago been condemned to hell for my sins; but in Thy excessive mercy Thou givest me the Sacrament of Penance as a means of securing pardon, of escaping the torments of hell and of recovering my claim to heaven as Thy friend and Thy child. I thank Thee for this priceless favor, and I am resolved to profit by it. O Mary, obtain for me the grace always to make a good and sincere confession that will secure my pardon. Amen.

of Penance, in such cases mortal sin may be purged away by an act of perfect contrition and the purpose of confession as soon as this shall be possible. Hence if there is no priest at all within reach, the sick man, or one who is suddenly carried off by a fatal accident, will not die without forgiveness of sin if he has the dispositions which render him deserving of forgiveness. But if he who has been justified by an act of perfect contrition should fail to carry out his purpose of confession when opportunity offers, he would be guilty of another and a mortal sin.

7. In order to obtain forgiveness the sinner must prepare himself carefully for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance. He must be thoroughly possessed by a penitential spirit.

a. He must be conscious of his sinfulness, and, in as far as is possible, recognize and acknowledge each individual transgression. This is penance of the understanding.

b. He must feel sorrow for and detestation of his sins—penance of heart.

c. He must have a firm purpose of ceasing from sin—penance of the will.

d. He must confess his sins to a duly authorized priest—penance of the lips.

e. He must make satisfaction for the sins he has committed—penance of deed or action.

Thus five things are requisite for the due reception of the holy Sacrament of Penance: Examina-

tion of conscience, contrition, purpose of amendment, confession, satisfaction. To one who is thus well prepared the Church grants absolution.

Examination of Conscience.

1. In order to attain the grace of penance and amendment of life it is before all things necessary to be rightly acquainted with our own spiritual condition, that we may not deceive ourselves. Before approaching the sacerdotal tribunal we must judge ourselves, so that we may be able to accuse ourselves and may not esteem ourselves better than we are. Of this self-judgment the Apostle says: "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged." (1 Cor. xi. 31.)

The greatest danger for a man is to think himself without sin and without need of penance. Hear what the apostle says on this point: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (1 John i. 8.)

If we would attain to a knowledge of our spiritual state we must examine our conscience—that is, we must consider whether our thoughts, desires, words, and works are in accordance with the commandments of God and of the Church. But "who can understand sins?" (Ps. xviii. 13.) This is not so easy a task as many imagine. Examination of conscience is a serious, a momentous concern on

which very often the validity of the confession depends, and for which we need the assistance of supernatural grace. Above all, therefore, we must implore the Holy Spirit to enlighten us; without Him we can do nothing, consequently without Him we cannot perceive or repent of our sins. As Holy Scripture says: "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity." (Rom. viii. 26.)

Let us place ourselves in the presence of God, remembering that though we may deceive ourselves and our fellow-men, yet we cannot deceive God. Then let us listen to our own conscience, which will not fail to accuse us if we do not stifle its voice.

2. As we have to begin from our last confession it is necessary, in the first place, to ask one's self whether the last confession was a valid one; that is to say, whether our conscience was properly examined, whether we awakened in ourselves contrition and purpose of amendment, whether our confession was sincere, whether any injury we may have done to our neighbor was made good, and property unjustly acquired was restored. If forced to acknowledge that our previous confession was invalid, we must go back to the last good one. Then we must examine our conscience in a fixed order. The best rule is to go through the ten commandments of God, the five precepts of the Church, the seven deadly sins, etc. In doing so it is well to pause at each commandment and think in what place, in the company of what persons, about what occupation

one may have done wrong. Particular attention should be paid to the duties of one's position, e.g., those of a husband, a father, the master of a household, an official, a guardian, etc. To help one's memory one may take an examination of conscience such as is found in almost every good prayer-book. Only, one must guard against two things: against the confession of sins of which one is not guilty, because they are in the book, and, on the other hand, against the omission of anything that one has done, not counting it to be a sin because it is not one of those enumerated in the form of examination. The use of no form, even the best, can dispense us from searching into our own heart.

3. We must examine our conscience carefully and diligently. It would be negligence on the part of any one who was not in the habit of going frequently to confession were he only to examine his conscience for a few moments before confession. The best plan is to examine one's self at least the evening before. For the matter of that, no devout Christian goes to rest without having made an examination of conscience.

Our examination should be made without alarm and anxiety. The Sacrament of Penance is a source of consolation, and confession ought not to be a misery to us. The holy Council of Trent says explicitly: "It is certain that in the Church nothing else is required of penitents but that after each has examined himself diligently, and searched all the

folds and recesses of his conscience, he confess those sins by which he shall remember that he has mortally offended his Lord and God; while the other sins, which do not occur to him after diligent thought, are understood to be included as a whole in that same confession; for which sins we confidently say with the prophet: From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord." (Sess. 14, 5.)

It is most useful for us to ascertain whether we have gone forward or backward since our last confession. Have we done the former, we shall be encouraged to proceed on the same path; if the latter be the case, it will show us the danger in which we are, and the contrition that fills us will be all the deeper. For we must always keep before our minds this truth: that there is no standing still in the spiritual life; to stand still is equivalent to going back; he who does not grow better grows worse.

Contrition.

Among all the things that appertain to a worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance, contrition holds the foremost place. It consists in grief of soul for sins committed, with a purpose of sinning no more. According to the decision of the Council of Trent contrition includes not merely cessation from sin and a resolution to begin a new life, but more than all a detestation of the old manner

of life, as Holy Scripture says: "Cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed, and make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit." (Ezech. xviii. 31.)

It does not suffice, therefore, to recite an act of contrition from one's prayer-book before going to confession, without thinking much about it; or, after having made one's confession, merely to add: "For these and all my other sins I am heartily sorry." Contrition must come from the soul, for with the soul we have sinned. The Psalmist indicates this in the words: "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit; a contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Ps. l. 19.)

1. Such contrition as this is the only real contrition, even though it be not attended by any extraordinary external manifestations of grief. Tears and lamentations are not invariably tokens of a genuine repentance, for we may quote the words of the prophet when he said: "Rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God." (Joel ii. 13.)

2. Contrition must be *universal* and *supreme*. It would profit us nothing were we to repent of all our sins with one single exception, because by the committal of this one sin alone we equally have given proof of our disobedience and ingratitude towards God. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all." (James ii. 10.)

Contrition must be supreme, because the good lost through sin is infinite in magnitude, none other than God Himself. "The Blessed and only Mighty, the King of kings and Lord of lords." (1 Tim. vi. 15.)

3. True contrition arises from supernatural motives. Natural sorrow for sin has no value in God's sight. It is only natural that the sinner should repent of this sin which has brought evil consequences upon him. The spendthrift is sorry for his extravagance when he finds himself in destitution, having squandered all he possessed. He who has ruined his health through his excesses, he who has thus incurred disgrace and shame, loss or punishment, may well feel remorse for what he has done. If evil-doers could undo the effects of their evil deeds, they might learn to be more careful, but they would never correct themselves. Not only would they not be better men, they perhaps would not even be wiser.

There are three principal motives of contrition: the fear of God, gratitude towards God, and the love of God.

Contrition arises from the fear of God if we sorrow for sin because we have thereby angered and offended God, our just, omniscient, and almighty Judge, and because we are conscious that we have thereby deserved, and shall receive, temporal and eternal punishment.

Contrition arises from gratitude if we sorrow for

sin because we have thereby shown ourselves unthankful towards God, Our Creator, Redeemer, Saviour, and Sanctifier, who has conferred on us benefits so numerous and so great, and because we have rendered ourselves unworthy of these benefits and of all future ones.

Such contrition as this, arising either from fear or from gratitude, is *supernatural* contrition. Out of consideration for the frailty of our human nature, it suffices for the forgiveness of mortal sins, provided to it be added the hope of pardon and purpose of amendment, and the penitent approaches the Sacrament of Penance. For although such contrition certainly is supernatural, yet it is imperfect, and is of itself insufficient, unless the Sacrament of Penance is received.

Perfect contrition, which, when a man is debarred from the privilege of receiving the holy Sacrament of Penance, purges from mortal sin, is that contrition which arises solely from the love of God. If we grieve for our sins only because we have offended and outraged God, in Himself most great, most glorious, most deserving of our love—the Supreme Good—then our contrition is worthy of God, and perfect, for this reason, that it is free from all selfish considerations and is concerned only with God and His perfections. This perfect contrition avails men before the Sacrament of Penance is received to cancel mortal sin, and reconcile the sinner with God, if it is accompanied with the

resolution to receive the Sacrament of Penance.

1. All supernatural contrition, imperfect as well as perfect, is a grace which we receive from God, and which we must implore with fervent prayer, as did David when he said: "Cast me not away from Thy face, and take not Thy holy Spirit from me." (Ps. l. 13.) The action of the Holy Ghost alone, in the light of faith, can make known to us the reason why we should be sorry for our sins; it alone can awaken within us deep contrition of heart and produce a complete conversion of will.

2. In order to evoke within ourselves supernatural sorrow for sin, we need only consider seriously how terrible an offence it is against God. The people of Israel had transgressed against God, and Jeremias the prophet thus expresses the greatness of their offence: "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and ye gates thereof be very desolate. . . . They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water." (Jer. ii. 12, 13.)

Sin is, moreover, an act of shameful ingratitude towards God, who has lavished upon us the gifts of His grace; so much so that He may justly address to every human soul these words: "What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it? Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?" (Is. v. 4.) But punishment soon overtakes the sinner, for the Lord proceeds to say:

"Now I will show you what I will do to My vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be wasted; I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down. And I will make it desolate; it shall not be pruned and it shall not be digged; but briers and thorns shall come up ; and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it." (Is. v. 5, 6.)

Such is the fate of every soul that despises God. God withdraws His grace from it, which is to the soul what rain and dew from heaven are to the vineyard. All the merits hitherto accumulated are swept away by sin ; all that we have done for heaven is completely lost. Divine grace is transformed into divine displeasure, divine wrath. "If the just man turn away from his justice, and do iniquity. . . . all his justices which he hath done shall not be remembered." (Ezech. xviii. 24.)

And just as we are bereft of all the merits which we have earned for heaven, so, while we are in a state of sin, we are utterly unable to acquire merit. The Passion and death of Christ profit us nothing; we cease to be heirs of the kingdom of heaven; the bliss of heaven no longer exists for us. We are enslaved by the devil, and hell is our portion. The serious consideration of all these truths cannot fail to awaken contrition within us, if only imperfect contrition. This imperfect contrition will, however, rise to the higher degree of perfect contrition if we ponder the infinite love of the

Father, who desires nothing more earnestly than that we should find our happiness in Him; who gave up His own Son for our salvation; who for His own sake, for the sake of His perfections, His charity, His goodness, so richly deserves our love. The consideration of all these facts will arouse within us that sorrow of soul which we call by the name of perfect contrition.

3. We must rouse ourselves to contrition if we have formed the purpose of going to confession, for it constitutes the principal condition for its due reception. Confession is valid so long as contrition is awakened before the priest gives the absolution. Accordingly if, from force of habit or for any other reason, a man goes to confession without having previously made an act of contrition, and yet is moved to contrition by the words addressed to him by the priest, that man's confession is valid. But if sorrow for sin only comes after the absolution has been pronounced, the confession is invalid and must be made over again.

Perfect contrition must not only be awakened in us if one is in danger of death, but whenever we have the misfortune to commit sin and cannot at once go to confession. For it is dangerous to live in mortal sin, not only because one who is in a state of wrath can do nothing for heaven and for his own salvation, but also because the uncertainty of human life exposes him continually to danger of death, and were he to die suddenly without

confession and absolution he would be lost forever.

Examples.

We find in Holy Scripture instances of true and false repentance. Esau repented having sold his birthright for a pottage of lentils, and he gave vent to his sorrow in loud cries. But it was no true contrition that he felt, for God permitted him to be defrauded of his father's blessing also. The Apostle says: "We know that afterwards, when he desired to inherit the benediction, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though with tears he had sought it." (Heb. xii. 17.) Saul acknowledged that he had done wrong in regard to David, and said aloud before all his men-at-arms: "I have sinned; return, my son David, for I will no more do thee harm." (1 Kings xxvi. 21.) Yet he continued to entertain ill feelings towards David. Antiochus' eyes were opened when he was smitten by God with an incurable and grievous disease; he promised to make everything good, he even wrote to the Jews and made humble apologies. Yet it is said of him: "Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of whom he was not like to obtain mercy." (2 Mach. ix. 13.)

David, on the other hand, affords an example of true penitence. He confesses, "My days are vanished like smoke, and my bones are grown dry like fuel for the fire. I am smitten as grass, and my

heart is withered: because I forgot to eat my bread. Through the voice of my groaning, my bone hath cleaved to my flesh. . . . I have watched, and am become like a sparrow, alone on the housetop. . . . I did eat ashes like bread, and mingled my drink with weeping, because of Thy anger and indignation." (Ps. ci. 4–11.) Peter went out and wept bitterly. (Matt. xxvi. 75.) Magdalen is the pattern of a sinner, who repents of her sin out of pure love of God, and therefore merits to have these consoling words said of her: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much." (Luke vii. 47.) "The sorrow that is according to God worketh penance, steadfast unto salvation; but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (2 Cor. vii. 10.)

Purpose of Amendment.

The determination to correct one's self and change one's life is the necessary fruit of true contrition. Purpose of amendment is therefore its inseparable accompaniment. Like the Prodigal Son, the soul says within herself: "I will arise and will go to my Father." (Luke xv. 18.)

1. Since the purpose of amendment has its source in true contrition, it follows that if that purpose be genuine it will possess all the characteristics of true contrition. Like the latter, it must extend to all sins committed, and thus be compre-

hensive or universal; it must spring from supernatural motives; moreover the sinner must not rest satisfied with forming a resolution, he must carry it out, just as the Prodigal Son did not rest inactive by the side of his swine, but actually returned to his father.

2. It is not enough to make a general resolution to lead a changed life for the future. The purpose must be definite if it is to be effectual. One must propose to one's self to avoid some particular sin of which one has been guilty. The repentant sinner will shun the person who has been his accomplice in sin, and break off the acquaintance by which he has been ensnared. The man who cannot keep within the bounds of moderation in drink will keep away from the tavern altogether. He will no longer frequent the company of those by whom he is drawn into strife, roused to anger, and led to use bad language. He will most carefully beware of everything which may be to him a proximate occasion of sin. It is no sign of strength, but rather of weakness, in a man if he thinks that a good resolution alone will enable him to withstand a temptation to which he has often succumbed. For God does not promise the assistance of His grace to those who of their own free will expose themselves to danger. The son of Sirach warns such persons that "he that loveth danger shall perish in it." (Ecclus. iii. 27.)

On the other hand, one who is really penitent

will make use of the means which Our Lord appointed to enable man to preserve sanctifying grace. He will especially examine himself diligently, and observe at what time and in what place temptation is likely to assail him, and so be beforehand in averting the danger. And since no man can know what he may have to encounter in the course of the day, let him fervently pray, as Our Lord taught His disciples to pray: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (Matt. vi. 13.)

3. A good purpose of amendment also includes the desire to remove all scandal that one may have given, to repair any harm one may have done, whether to a man's property, by any kind of injustice, or to his reputation, by detraction or calumny. Nor ought one to delay in making reparation, for every day adds to the weight of guilt and responsibility. Sick people in particular ought not to trust to their heirs to act for them after their death; they ought themselves to do all they can for their soul's safety, remembering the words of Our Lord: "Thou shalt not go out from thence, till thou repay the last farthing." (Matt. v. 26.)

Confession.

In order to receive the Sacrament of Penance, it is not enough to repent of our sins; confession is needed to complete contrition. Now confession

is not the simple acknowledgment of our misdeeds, it is accusation of ourselves in the presence of a priest duly appointed by the Church, with the object of obtaining forgiveness of sins through the power of the keys. Confession is not an avowal of our evil deeds for the purpose of self-glorification, but of self-humiliation on account of them.

2. As our contrition must extend to all mortal sins, so all mortal sins must be included in our confession. They must be enumerated singly, even the most secret ones, even those which we have not committed in deed, but only in desire. For evil desires, which are prohibited by the ninth and tenth commandments, are also sinful and deserving of punishment. It often happens, the Roman Catechism tells us, that these evil concupiscences wound the soul more deeply than those through which men are accustomed freely and openly to offend against God.

It would be an insufficient and consequently an invalid confession were any one merely to accuse himself thus: I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and by the omission of good works. Or, again, if one were to make his confession in this way: I have broken the first commandment, I have broken the second commandment, and so on. For as each commandment forbids several sins, and these often of a very different nature, such a confession would be almost meaningless. For instance, the fifth commandment forbids murder,

manslaughter, quarrels, strife, excesses of all kinds, giving offence, and the like. A confession so vaguely worded would entirely miss its aim, because the priest could make nothing of it.

2. It is equally necessary to mention how often a sin has been committed. For the degree of carelessness and of malice can best be estimated by the greater or less number of times the sin has been repeated. In the same way it may be ascertained whether the soul is in more or less danger, and the sinner himself cannot have a thorough knowledge of his spiritual state until he perceives of how many imperfections, defects and sins he is obliged to confess himself guilty. Then indeed he feels the necessity of making his peace with God. In the words of David he exclaims: "If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities: Lord, who shall stand it?" (Ps. cxxix. 3.)

Unfortunately it often happens, especially in regard to habitual sins, that the number cannot be given. In this case the penitent must do the best he can. A careful examination of conscience will, however, enable us to ascertain how far we are enslaved by this habit of sin, so that we can form at least a proximate idea of the number of our transgressions. In this case there is always reason to fear lest our confession be faulty. The best means of guarding against the danger is to go frequently to confession. For the sake of the completeness of

one's confessions, if on no other grounds, they ought not to be made at long intervals.

The circumstances under which the sin was committed should also be explained, those more especially which aggravate the offence. They must be explained if they change the nature of the sin. For instance, it is a much greater transgression to steal from a poor man than to rob a rich man ; it makes a great difference whether one steals bread under pressure of want, or takes fruit merely out of greediness ; whether one wilfully and of set purpose calumniates a man who has done one no harm, or if, carried away by anger, one makes use of abusive expressions in regard to those who have acted towards us in a hostile manner ; whether one has applied scurrilous epithets to individuals who are not related to one, or to one's own parents ; whether one has conducted one's self with undue familiarity towards unmarried or married persons, or towards any one who is consecrated to God.

Confession must be entire and direct, and also couched in fitting language. It is unnecessary to repeat in the confessional all the abusive language, the oaths one may have uttered. This would be by no means a proof of sincerity. A confession made in a spirit of supernatural contrition is in itself sincere. If such be the disposition of the penitent, he will feel no inclination to excuse himself or his misdeeds ; on the contrary, he will say with the Psalmist : "I have acknowledged my sin unto Thee,

and my injustice I have not concealed." (Ps. xxxi. 5.)

3. It is undoubtedly an act of self-conquest to reveal to another man, a sinner like one's self, the most secret recesses of the heart, to discover to him all the sins of which one is one's self ashamed, and submit one's self to his judgment. But what the natural man cannot do is not beyond the power of one who is strengthened by supernatural grace. There are, besides, natural reasons which should induce us to lay aside all timidity, and as we were not ashamed to sin, so now not to be ashamed to confess our sin. For (*a*) it is in itself a cause of thankfulness that the Lord Our God has not given us an angel for our judge, but a fellow mortal, laden with the same infirmities as ourselves, subject to the same temptations, compelled to wage the same warfare. The priest knows well how frail is human nature, and on this account he is the fitting representative of Christ: "The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not extinguish." (Matt. xii. 20.)

b. The priest is pledged to observe the strictest secrecy concerning all that is confided to him in confession. Even to the penitent himself not the slightest allusion may be made out of the confessional to what has been said in it. A priest who should venture to repeat anything told him in confession would have his faculties withdrawn and be severely punished. Many priests (e.g., St. John

Nepomucene), when endeavors were made to force them to reveal the secrets of the confessional, have chosen rather to lay down their lives than break the seal. Is it not wonderful, considering how many millions of priests have heard confessions, that not a single case has ever occurred in which the seal of confession has been broken? Even priests who have fallen into mortal sin have so shrunk from violating this solemn seal that no one has ever been known to be guilty of this crime. Is not this a marvellous grace attached to this sacrament? God Himself provides against any abuse being made of it.

c. Without confession there can be no absolution, and without sacerdotal absolution on earth no remission of sins in heaven. "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper; but he that shall confess, and forsake them, shall obtain mercy." (Prov. xxviii. 13.)

d. All men will one day be summoned to appear before the tribunal of God, and everything which is not forgiven will be made manifest; the sins which have not been confessed will be brought to light and seen of all men. These words of the Apostle Paul will then be fulfilled: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." (Rom. ii. 16.) Then holy penitents will appear in the sight of the whole universe clad in stainless garments which have been cleansed in the laver of penance, while

those who have concealed their sins will wish to sink into the earth in order to hide their wickedness from the eyes of men. How much better it is to confess to the priest than to be put to shame before all one's friends and acquaintances! "For there is nothing hid which shall not be made manifest; neither was it made secret but that it may come abroad." (Mark iv. 22.)

4. Confession ought not, however, as has already been said, to be a misery for the penitent. It is intended rather to comfort and to tranquillize the conscience. The sinner will be invigorated by the spiritual medicine prescribed for him by the confessor; the wounds of his soul will be healed. The exhortation addressed to him by the priest will lift up him who is bowed down. The priest receives the repentant sinner as the father received the Prodigal Son, with unbounded loving-kindness; and the more sincere the sinner the more kindly he is received. This is why the priest—although he really pronounces a judicial sentence—is called a father, not a judge.

5. If the penitent unintentionally omits some sin in confession, although he has diligently examined his conscience, his confession is not on that account invalid. He must, however, mention the sin in his next confession if it is a serious one. But one mortal sin wilfully omitted vitiates the whole confession, for it is made without true compunction, without purpose of amendment and of reparation.

The penitent must not only go over this invalid confession again, and confess all the sins he has since committed, but he must also accuse himself of all his subsequent communions, as they have all been made unworthily. This not unfrequently proves a difficult task, but it is indispensable. It is also very useful to make a general confession of one's past life, not only for the sake of making good any confessions that may have been defective, but for a thorough conversion. It is especially advisable for those who are entering upon a new state of life—who are about to be married, for instance. By thus passing in review all the sins of one's whole life at once, one will be moved to deeper contrition, and feel urged to resolve upon leading an entirely new life.

6. Devout persons who frequently receive holy communion, are often at a loss to find matter for confession, as they are watchful over themselves, and through their good will are preserved from sin by God's grace. Such persons should confess some sin of their past life; this practice is most useful for obtaining remission of sins and thus procuring greater peace of conscience.

Since the priest is pledged to the strictest secrecy in confession, the penitent should likewise know how to observe silence. He should beware of ever telling anything out of his confession that might discredit the priest or bring the Sacrament of Penance into odium or contempt, or be the cause of

annoyance to any one. The confessor cannot say a word in his own defence, because of the sacredness of confession; moreover, any one who is so little in earnest as to prate about his own confession is quite capable of falsehood and misrepresentation. To listen to the confessions of another would be malicious, hateful, and blasphemous curiosity; and to repeat a sin that one had overheard would be a sacrilegious injury to the reputation of one's neighbor.

The Form of Confession.

Any one purposing to go to confession will do well to betake himself in good time to the church, so that he may not be hurried over the proximate preparation, but may go tranquilly through the preliminaries: invocation of the Holy Ghost, examination of conscience, acts of contrition and sorrow, prayer for forgiveness, etc. When this preparation has been duly made, let him go up to the confessional.

If there are several persons waiting to go to confession, let him go near enough to the confessional to pass in immediately when the person kneeling there comes out, that time may not be lost in going to and fro. Care must, however, be taken not to go too close, else what is being said in the confessional might be overheard. On kneeling down in the confessional let him cross himself, and say: "I confess

to almighty God, to Blessed Mary ever Virgin, to all the saints, and to you, father, that since my last confession (which was so many weeks or months ago) I have committed the following sins." Then let him confess his sins in a low tone of voice, so as to be understood by the priest, but not heard by any one outside. Having accused himself of all that he can remember, let him conclude thus: "For these and all the sins of my past life I am heartily sorry and ask pardon of almighty God and of you, my ghostly father."

Then let him listen attentively to the instructions of the confessor. Should the latter have occasion to ask any questions, these must be answered simply and truthfully. While the priest is speaking, the penitent must not keep thinking whether he has said all he had to say, but must pay the greatest attention to the words addressed to him. When the priest gives the blessing, one should make the sign of the cross; and after the words "Go in peace" have been spoken, leave the confessional and go to his place, moving as noiselessly as possible, to avoid disturbing other people. Nor should he hurry home, but in recollection and quiet make acts of faith, hope and charity, give thanks to God, make resolutions for the future, and let it be seen by his conduct that the grace of God has not been void in him.

Auricular Confession.

There is no institution in the Catholic Church which her foes regard with such hatred as the self-accusation and confession of sin that are requisite for the reception of the Sacrament of Penance. Not only do they deny that this rule is of divine appointment, but they impudently assert it to have been introduced by Pope Innocent III. in the year 1215, at the fourth Lateran Council. The enemies of the Church contemptuously term this confession, made to a duly ordained priest, *auricular confession*, although no confession, whether general or particular, can be heard otherwise than with the ears: and for what purpose is confession made if not to be heard? The necessity for the confession of individual sins will be proved incontestably by what follows.

1. Our Lord gave to His apostles and their successors the power not only to loose, but also to bind; not only to remit sins, but also to retain them. The confessor has no right to act arbitrarily, saying to one, you are free; to another, you are bound; but he must absolve the one, and dismiss the other without absolution. This he cannot do except on the ground of an accurate knowledge of the spiritual state of the penitent, a knowledge that can only be acquired by means of sincere and contrite confession. In the Sacrament of Pen-

ance the confessor exercises a judicial power. Now a judge only gives sentence according to the facts of the case, which he has searched out and investigated beforehand.

In the Sacrament of Penance the confessor is also a physician whose office it is to prescribe remedies for the sick soul. For this it is equally necessary that he should be acquainted with the nature of the hurt which he has to heal.

2. In the Acts of the Apostles we find an instance of confession. When Paul was laboring at Ephesus, where he cured many who were sick and cast out devils, "some also of the Jewish exorcists who went about attempted to invoke over them that had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying: I conjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth. But the wicked spirit, answering, said to them: Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are you? And the man in whom the wicked spirit was, leaping upon them, and mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. And this became known to all the Jews and the Gentiles that dwelt at Ephesus, and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many of them that believed came confessing and declaring their deeds." (Acts xix. 13–18.)

The apostle James also exhorts the Christians thus: "Confess therefore your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be saved."

(James v. 16.) And in St. John's epistles we read: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity." (1 John i. 8, 9.)

The Witness of the Fathers in Support of Confession.

The testimony of the Fathers is more clear and decisive on this point than on almost any other article of faith. It reaches back to the earliest ages of Christianity, for we find Clement of Rome, the third successor of St. Peter, of whom St. Paul says that his name is in the book of life, writing thus to the Corinthians: "While we are in this world we must turn away with our whole heart from the sins which we have committed, that we may find mercy with God while we still have time for penance, for when once we have departed out of this world we can no longer confess or do penance."

Tertullian's words are as follows: "If you do not go to confession, remember the fire of eternity, which is extinguished by confession. Will concealing something from the knowledge of a man enable us to hide it from God? Which is preferable, to be condemned through concealment or acquitted through confession? Woe be to those who put off

confession from day to day, and care more about a little confusion than about their eternal salvation!" St. Augustine writes thus: "The man who says, I repent of my sins in secret before God, to confess to God is quite sufficient, makes void the Gospel, the word of God. If that were enough, for what purpose would the power of the keys have been given to the Church? Why would Jesus Christ have said: 'Whatsoever you bind or loose shall be loosed or bound in heaven'? Blush not to confess to one man what thou didst not blush to do in the sight of many. It is better to suffer a little shame before one man here than to be overwhelmed with confusion in the presence of multitudes of men hereafter on the Day of Judgment."

Irenæus, Athanasius, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Leo the Great, and other Fathers of both the Latin and the Greek Churches express themselves no less plainly and unequivocally on this subject.

Confession in the Russian Church.

The fact that all the Churches which have separated themselves from the See of Rome since the unhappy schism of Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople, have retained the ordinance of confession is perhaps the strongest evidence that it is of divine institution. As the Greek Church seceded as early as the year 867, it will be seen how unfounded is

the statement that confession was introduced by Innocent III. in 1215. For the schismatics, in their hostility to the Latin Church, would certainly not have adopted the practice of confession had it not been the usage previous to the separation. By far the most important of the schismatical Churches is the Greek, and the Russian, which is an offshoot from it; it will therefore be interesting for us to know what is their practice in regard to confession.

The ordinance of confession in the Russian Church is a very elaborate proceeding, and on this account many persons, especially the upper classes, make their confession in their own houses, for a number of prayers have to be recited with each individual before he begins his confession. Among these prayers is one to the Mother of God, which runs thus: "O blessed Mother of God, open to us, whose hope is in thee, the gate of grace; let us not be put to confusion, but grant that we may be delivered out of all tribulation by thee, who art the salvation of all Christians."

After all the various prayers have ended, the priest addresses the following exhortation to the penitent:

"Behold, my child, Christ is here present, though unseen, to receive thy confession. Wherefore be not ashamed, neither be afraid, but tell me without equivocation what thou hast done, in order that thou mayst obtain forgiveness from Our Lord Jesus Christ. Look at this image before us [the crucifix].

I am here but as a witness, to report to Him what thou sayst to me; see to it that, as thou comest hither for the sake of the medicine, thou dost not depart unhealed."

He then questions the penitent concerning his faith: "Tell me, dost thou believe the doctrine delivered to and taught by the Catholic and Apostolic Church, which, planted in the East, has spread thence throughout the whole world, and both in the East and here is immovable and immutable; and doubtest thou none of the traditions?"

On the penitent replying in the affirmative, he is required to repeat the Creed. Then he makes his confession. When this is ended, the priest says: "Bow down thy head." The penitent bends his head, and the priest proceeds:

"O Lord God, the Saviour of Thy servant, gracious, merciful, and long-suffering, who art grieved by sin and willest not the death of the sinner, but that he should be converted and live; forgive, O Lord, this Thy servant N.; grant to him the assurance of penance, pardon and remission of sin; absolve him from all the transgressions that he has wittingly committed; reconcile him and unite him again to Thy holy Church. Through Jesus Christ Our Lord, to whom with Thee be honor and glory, now and for evermore. Amen."

At the conclusion of this prayer the penitent prostrates himself at the feet of the priest, who gives him absolution, saying: "May Jesus Christ,

Our Lord and God, through His grace, His goodness and His love, forgive thee, my child [mentioning his name], all thy sins. And I, an unworthy priest, through the power committed to me, absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

With these words he makes the sign of the cross over the penitent with his right hand. Some acts of thanksgiving follow; then the penitent kisses the cross and the book of the gospels, and goes his way.

Hence it will be seen that the Roman Church makes the reception of the Sacrament of Penance somewhat more easy, since she retains of the ordinance as appointed originally only the essential part of the sacrament, confession to a priest and absolution given by him; leaving it to the penitent to prepare himself for the reception of the sacred mystery, and give thanks after receiving it by various prayers and acts of virtue.

Satisfaction.

In the holy Sacrament of Penance the Lord Our God remits the eternal penalty due to sin, and not unfrequently the temporal penalty also, as when Our Lord said to the penitent thief: "To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) On the other hand, He often remits entirely only

the guilt and eternal punishment of sin, leaving some temporal punishment to be borne by the sinner on account of his iniquities, either here on earth or hereafter in purgatory; as Solomon says: "The just vengeance of sinners always punisheth the transgression of the unjust." (Wisd. xiv. 31.)

1. It is not enough to have contrite dispositions. The sinner must also perform works of satisfaction to appease the divine justice. In order to enable the repentant sinner to expiate the temporal penalty of sin and amend his life, the confessor sets him a penance to be performed, consisting, as a rule, in prayers, alms, fasts, or other corporal mortifications, which constitutes an integral part of the Sacrament of Penance, so that any one refusing to perform the penance laid upon him would not be absolved. But if a penitent sees beforehand that it will be impossible for him to perform the penance enjoined by the confessor, let him say so humbly, and ask that some other may be given him. No one must venture to change his penance on his own authority. The penance must be performed with devotion and fervor, exactly in the manner prescribed by the confessor, and as soon as possible. Every time of going to confession one should ask one's self whether the penance imposed the last time has been duly performed. A confession made without the intention of performing the penance would be invalid, and must be repeated. And if it has been omitted not with any

bad intention, but for some other reason, such as carelessness, the confession is not thereby rendered invalid, but the penitent has done wrong and deprived himself of many graces. At any rate, he must mention it in his next confession if a greater work of penance has not been performed in consequence.

2. The penances imposed by the confessor ought, it is true, to be proportioned both to the nature and gravity of the sin, and to the strength of the penitent; but the Church's maternal indulgence for the weakness of her children, and the wise consideration of changed times and circumstances, have induced her to abate the ancient severity of her discipline, so that the penance of the present day hardly deserves to be called a punishment. But it appertains to the nature of contrition, arising from supernatural motives, that the sinner should supply what is wanting to the penance imposed upon him by the confessor by voluntary works of penance, to wit, prayers, fasts, almsgiving, especially by patient endurance of sufferings and afflictions, pre-eminently those that are the evil consequences of our sins. These works of penance are at the same time an excellent means of amendment as being directly opposed to bad habits. Almsgiving expiates sins of avarice; fasting subdues the concupiscences of the flesh; humble prayer is an antidote for pride. The sinner will besides be more watchful in the future. Thus works of penance are

a true means of health to one who is really in earnest about his soul's welfare.

3. Although we perform certain penitential acts, we know full well that we cannot of ourselves make satisfaction, but that all our penances derive their expiatory virtue from the merits of Christ. Christ first of all made atonement for us, and when we perform works of penance we show our good will, by chastising ourselves in the hope of escaping divine chastisement. Wherefore it is great presumption on our part to say: I need not to do penance, because Christ has suffered for me and borne the punishment of sin in my stead. Let us rather contemplate the example of the Apostle Paul, who did penance on behalf of his brethren, as he declared to the Colossians in his epistle: "I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church." (Col. i. 24.)

Example.

The history of the people of Israel shows us that God, although He forgives sins and cancels the eternal punishment of sin, oftentimes retains the temporal punishment. The Jews had murmured against God, and He threatened to destroy them. Upon Moses' entreaty He forgave them, but He commanded him to tell the people: "All the men that have seen My majesty, and the signs that I

have done in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now ten times, and have not obeyed My voice, shall not see the land for which I swore to their fathers, neither shall any one of them that hath detracted Me behold it." (Numb. xiv. 22, 23.) And of all the men that came out of Egypt only Josue and Caleb were permitted to enter the promised land. Even Moses and Aaron were only privileged to view the land from afar, because they had doubted whether the water would flow in abundance out of the rock. (Numb. xxvii. 13, 14.) When David repented bitterly of the sin he had been guilty of with the wife of Urias, the Lord announced to him forgiveness by the mouth of the prophet Nathan, but yet he punished him by the death of the child he so fondly loved. (2 Kings xii. 18.) And when that same David, dazzled by pride, caused the people to be numbered, the Lord forgave him the sin, but punished him for it by sending a pestilence upon Israel. (2 Kings xxiv. 13.) The exhortation of John the Baptist proves that God is appeased by penance: "Bring forth fruits worthy of penance." (Luke iii. 8.) And Our Lord Himself mentions almsgiving as a work of penance when He says: "Give alms, and behold, all things are clean unto you." (Luke xi. 41.)

The lives of God's servants abound in voluntary works of penance, in the bitterest mortifications, the most severe austerities. St. Peter wept for his sin all the remainder of his days. St. Paul resisted

unto blood, striving against sin. (Heb. xii. 4.) Magdalen fasted and prayed in the desert all her life long. All the friends of God have done likewise, following the counsel of St. Augustine: "If thou wouldst not be punished by God, punish thyself."

St. John Chrysostom on the Manner in which We ought to do Penance.

"This is what I call penance: when a man not merely forsakes his sins, but does good works in the place of them. Bring forth fruits worthy of penance, says St. John. How are we to do this? I answer, by doing what is directly opposed to our sins. For instance: thou hast taken another man's goods; begin to give away that which is thine own. Hast thou suffered thyself to be led away by thy concupiscences to forbidden indulgences? In atonement abstain for a time from what is permitted. Hast thou offended or injured thy neighbor in word or deed? Give him kind words in place of insults, and benefits in compensation for the harm thou hast done him. For unseemly revels substitute fasting, and for excess of wine punish thyself by drinking water. If thine eyes have wandered after unchaste objects, close them so as not to look upon what is innocent."

From such passages, treating of penance, which

are found in all the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, we learn that works of penance, although arduous, are efficacious. Penance has been justly called by the Fathers a painful kind of baptism.

Absolution.

It is not sufficient that the penitent should be sorry for his misdeeds, go to confession, and agree to make the necessary satisfaction; he must also be actually absolved from his sins. The absolution consists in these words pronounced by the priest: "I absolve thee from thy sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

In regard to absolution these things are to be borne in mind:

1. Absolution is not merely a declaration that God has remitted the sin; it is a real judicial act which the priest performs in virtue of the powers granted to the apostles. (Matt. xviii. 18.)

2. No one has power to absolve from sin as in the place of God except a rightfully ordained priest, who has received from his bishop faculties which have not subsequently been withdrawn. These faculties, however, extend only to the limits of the diocese of the bishop by whom they have been conferred. For instance, a priest who has powers for the archdiocese of New York or West-

minster cannot hear confessions in any other diocese unless the bishop of that diocese has given him faculties either for the whole diocese or for some special place or particular occasion, such as when he is helping in a mission.

3. In order that his absolution may be valid, the priest must have authority or jurisdiction over the person to be absolved. The Holy Father has jurisdiction over the whole of Christendom, the bishop over his see, the priest in his parish.* Assistant priests have the same jurisdiction as the parish priest, and so have any priests whose services are requested by the parish priest for any particular occasion. The superiors of religious orders have jurisdiction over the members of their order. But in the case of danger of death all these limitations are removed; and if no rightly authorized priest is within call, a priest who has been suspended, nay, even an apostate priest can hear the confession of a dying man, or one in danger of death, and give him absolution.

4. There are also sins from which every priest has not power to absolve, but which, on account of their more grievous and atrocious nature, are reserved to the bishop or Pope. This is done in order to bring home to those who commit such sins a sense of the magnitude of their guilt and that they may be properly dealt with. Every confessor is told what sins are reserved in the diocese; and

* The priests receive jurisdiction from the bishop generally for the whole diocese, though specially for their parishes.

any one who has the misfortune to fall into one of these sins will be informed by his confessor how he may obtain absolution.

5. The confessor is not only empowered to absolve the repentant sinner: it is likewise his duty to refuse absolution to sinners who, though they come to confession, have not a good will to amend their life. Were he to absolve such persons he would be guilty of an abuse of the powers confided to him and commit a grievous sin. Those who ought not to be absolved are, among others, the following:

Those who will not restore property unjustly acquired.

Those who will not make up quarrels.

Those who have frequently relapsed into the self-same mortal sin and will not employ the means of avoiding it.

Those who will not shun the occasions of sin, the individuals who have been their accomplices in sin, the places where they are tempted to sin; who will not put an end to the scandal they give, etc., etc.

Now it sometimes happens that when a priest refuses to give absolution to a penitent the latter when he leaves the confessional complains loudly and blames the priest, who cannot say a word in his own justification on account of the seal of confession. The only thing to be said to such an unhappy man, who thinks himself aggrieved because absolution is denied him, is this: It is

owing to the nature of your confession; by your own conduct you have been undeserving of it. To no one is the withholding of absolution so great a grief as to the confessor himself.

Instruction.

Above all things we must beware of not making the right distinction between confession and penance. It was not the sacrament of confession, but the Sacrament of Penance, that Christ instituted. Confession is but a part of the Sacrament of Penance, and not even the principal part; contrition, purpose of amendment, and satisfaction are all more important. The mere avowal of sin, without real compunction and a corresponding resolution of amendment, does not purge away sin. God requires before all a contrite and a humbled heart, and to such He grants His grace.

And with the assistance of God's grace we must labor perseveringly at the amendment of our life. Most especially we must be on our guard against relapsing through our negligence into our old sins, lest finally that should be true of us which the apostle Peter said of some: "It had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them. For that of the true proverb has happened to them: The dog is returned to his vomit; and

the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.)

Examples.

Adam, the first sinner on earth, was also the first penitent. When God asked him: "Hast thou eaten of the forbidden fruit?" he confessed, and did not deny having done so. Cain, on the other hand, when asked by God: "Where is thy brother Abel?" answered defiantly: "I know not; am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. iv. 9.) Therefore Adam found mercy, but Cain did not; for we read in the Book of Wisdom: "Wisdom preserved him, that was first formed by God, the Father of the world, when he was created alone. And she brought him out of his sin, and gave him power to govern all things. But when the unjust went away from her in his anger, he perished by the fury wherewith he murdered his brother." (Wisd. x. 1–3.)

The example of the inhabitants of Ninive affords clear proof that penance earns forgiveness. When they heard the prophecy of Jonas they looked into their own hearts. "They proclaimed a fast, and put on the garments of mourning, from the greatest to the least. And the word came to the king of Ninive, and he rose up out of his throne, and cast away his robe from him, and was clothed with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published in Ninive from the

mouth of the king and of his princes, saying: Let neither men nor beasts, oxen nor sheep, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water. And let men and beasts cry to the Lord with all their strength; and let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the iniquity that is in their hands. . . . And God saw their works, and that they were turned from their evil way, and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do to them, and He did it not." (Jon. iii. 5–10.)

Again, we see how forgiveness is granted to penance by the example of King Achab (3 Kings xxi. 27–29), King Josias (4 Kings xxii. 19, 20), King Ezechias (2 Paral. xxxii. 26), and King Manasses (*Ib.* xxxiii. 12, 13), from whom God, for the sake of their penance, averted the evil that He was about to send upon them.

Indulgences.

In the Sacrament of Penance, as has been seen, the eternal punishment due to sin is always remitted, but, on account of the defectiveness of our contrition, not always the temporal punishment—the punishment, that is to say, which we must suffer either here on earth or hereafter in purgatory. Wherefore the Church comes to our aid with indulgences in order that we may also obtain remission of the temporal punishment still due to sin.

1. By indulgences, therefore, we mean, not the remission of sin, but the remission of temporal punishment. Before obtaining the benefit of indulgences our guilt must have been washed away in the Sacrament of Penance. Indulgences are consequently granted apart from the Sacrament of Penance.

This shows the folly of those who assert that in the Catholic Church remission of sin may be purchased with money and that one is afterwards free to sin again. For since absolution, which is an indispensable preliminary, is only granted to those who are sincerely contrite—and a firm resolution to

sin no more for the future belongs to sincere contrition—it follows as a necessary consequence that indulgences are intended as a consolation for the contrite, not as an encouragement to continue in sin.

2. The Church received from Our Lord the power to grant indulgences at the same time as she received power to remit sins. For when Our Lord said to Peter: Whatsoever thou shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven (Matt. xvi. 19) He made no exception. Who would imagine that Christ, who gave His apostles authority to remit sin and the eternal penalty of sin, would have denied them the far lesser authority of cancelling its temporal penalty?

3. As indulgences form no part of the Sacrament of Penance, the confessor has not power to grant them. This power appertains to the rulers of the Church alone, and is vested in the successor of Peter, the Pope of Rome, who exercises it throughout the whole Church on behalf of every one of her members. Bishops have the right of granting indulgences only within their own dioceses; but in order to prevent abuses, or any disturbance of the peace of the Church, the ecclesiastical canons require every indulgence to be sanctioned by the Pope. It is customary for bishops to grant partial and local indulgences on certain occasions, such as the consecration of a church.

4. An indulgence is not an ordinary absolution;

it is an application of the superabundant treasures of the Church, the merits of Christ and of the saints. The satisfaction made by Christ was infinite and no further satisfaction on the part of man was necessary to render it an available source of indulgences. But in His mercy and charity Jesus Christ permits what is over and above in the merits of the saints to count as penance for our sins. Now the holy martyrs and confessors, in fact all of God's saints, have expiated more than their offences required. And as we all constitute one great family, and are united in one body, the Church—and as the good works and merits of the Church are common to all her members, so the penitential works of the saints, as well as the infinite work of satisfaction made by Jesus Christ, are applied to us for the remission of our temporal punishment.

Indulgences profit the holy souls in purgatory also, since they, too, belong to the body of Christ's Church. But, as they are no longer under the jurisdiction of the Church, indulgences can only be applied to them by way of suffrage. It is permitted to the faithful to pray God of His mercy to apply the indulgence, or remission of punishment, which they have gained, not to themselves, but to the suffering souls in their stead. The wisest course is to leave all to the love and wisdom of God, making it our intention that those souls may be benefited by them who are the most deserving and the most necessitous. It must be re-

membered that those indulgences alone are applicable to the suffering souls which the Holy See expressly states to be so.

5. Indulgences are plenary or partial according as the remission of the temporal penalties is entire or limited. In the case of partial indulgences the amount of canonical penance remitted is always stated. If, on the announcement of an indulgence, a term of seven years and seven quarantines (forty days' fast) or a hundred days is granted, this means that so much is remitted as would have been remitted by seven years and seven quarantines or a hundred days of public canonical penance. It is necessary in order to gain indulgences to have in a general manner the intention of so doing.

6. As the sin whereby the Christian draws upon himself a temporal punishment must be expiated, to a certain extent at least, by the sinner, the Church requires some good work as the condition of gaining the indulgence. For partial indulgences it is usually some act of devotion—e. g., the recital of a prescribed prayer; for plenary, it is often the gift of money for some pious object which is mentioned—the erection of a church, the support of missions or Christian schools, or some other good work. Thus, for instance, Leo X. granted a plenary indulgence to all who should contribute towards the rebuilding of St. Peter's at Rome after it had been burned down. This indulgence being

published in Germany gave Luther occasion to inveigh against indulgences. Hence comes the absurd fable to which the antagonists of the Church still cling, that forgivenness of sins can be purchased with money. In the earlier centuries indulgences were also granted to those who contributed to the crusades or who joined the crusades, or who supported a hospital or performed similar good and charitable works enjoined by the Church.

In order to gain an indulgence it is first of all necessary to be in a state of grace. For obtaining a plenary indulgence the condition generally is a detestation of all sin, a good confession, and the reception of holy communion. It is requisite, besides, that the prescribed works should be performed conscientiously and while in a state of grace. For should a man who had made his confession and been to communion fall into mortal sin before performing the penance set him he would be incapable of gaining the indulgence until he was again in a state of grace. A further condition is prayer for the intention of the Holy Father, for the exaltation of the Church, the overthrow of her enemies, the peace of Christian princes and nations, the removal of all divisions and schisms, and for the Holy Father himself. It is enough to recite five *Paters* for the intention of His Holiness, to which another *Pater* may be added for the Holy Father in person. The intentions of the Holy Father are, however, nowhere expressed more ad-

mirably than in the Litany of the Saints and in the Universal Prayer.

Some Remarks About the Gaining of Indulgences.

1. An indulgence cannot be gained if the prescribed works are done by another; every one must perform them for himself.

2. If a single one of the prescribed conditions be unfulfilled, either through one's own fault or through infirmity or forgetfulness, the indulgence cannot be obtained.

3. Those persons whose pious habit it is to approach the Sacraments of Penance and of the Altar every week can gain all the indulgences which are to be gained during the week without going specially to confession for this object.

4. A work which is not done in view of gaining an indulgence is powerless to obtain it.

5. If an indulgence be offered up for the holy souls, let it not be thought to be of no profit to him who offers it. Not only does he gain the grace of making satisfaction for the holy souls, but he merits for himself an eternal reward.

6. If a visit to one or more churches is one of the prescribed conditions the visit must be made with no other intention than that of gaining the indulgence; it must not be made from curiosity or from mere habit; and one must conduct one's self in a devout and reverent manner on the way thither.

7. An indulgence cannot be gained by doing any work which is otherwise of obligation. Thus, supposing that to visit one's parish church three times is one of the conditions to be fulfilled: I cannot gain the indulgence by going to Mass on three Sundays unless I have already fulfilled the command of the Church by hearing Mass on the same day.

8. One must not lend or give away rosaries or medals or crucifixes to which an indulgence is attached; no one except the first owner of such articles can obtain the indulgence. On the death of the person to whom they originally belonged the indulgence is at an end. But by lending them to another the owner does not forfeit the indulgence.

Ecclesiastical Discipline in the Early Church.

It will readily be understood that among the early Christians, who were, for the most part, only baptized heathens, the old pagan nature not unfrequently came to the surface in one or other of them, and matters occurred which gave scandal to the Christian community. For instance, at Corinth a man took his father's wife (his stepmother) and lived with her in incestuous union. When the Apostle Paul heard of this he wrote to Corinth and pronounced this sentence upon the offender: "I indeed absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were

present, him that hath so done: In the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together and my spirit, with the power of Our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of Our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. v. 3–5.) Thus St. Paul ejected this sinner from the Christian congregation. The man was cut to the heart, and did penance with such contrition that the whole community felt compassion for him and told St. Paul of his good dispositions. The Apostle readmitted him to Christian fellowship; and this he did on account of the intercession made for him by the Christians of Corinth and, as he expressly declared, in the person of Christ. "To whom you have pardoned anything, I also. For what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned anything, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ." (2 Cor. ii. 10.) That is the first instance we meet with of granting indulgences.

In the times of persecution, when every effort was made by means of the most ingenious tortures to induce the Christians to abandon their faith, it oftentimes happened, unfortunately, that some gave way and purchased their life by denying Christ. These were set at liberty, but the faithful turned from them and excluded them from their communion. Thus many were brought to repentance, and willingly subjected themselves to a canonical penance of great severity for the remainder of their

lives. In their sorrow many appealed to the martyrs, even seeking them out in the prisons and entreating piteously for forgiveness. And the martyrs, like the Corinthians of whom mention has been made, sorrowed with them and pleaded for them, so that the punishment of the *lapsed*, as they were called, was either completely or partially remitted. That, again, was an indulgence. When Christianity was free to appear openly many sought admittance into the Church who were not animated by the holy fervor of the early Christians, and the bishops were obliged to enforce strict discipline. Public penance had to be done for public sins, and the nature and extent of that penance was not left to the judgment of every individual confessor, but the penalties which were to be imposed for certain sins were determined, with the general principle that as time went on the severity of the penance was to be relaxed. There were four classes through which the penitent must pass before being reconciled to the Church.

The first class was that of the mourners (*flentes*). When they commenced their period of penance their hair was cut off, ashes were strewn on their heads, and the priest announced their penance to them. This he did, in accordance with the decrees of the Council and the penitential books, in the following manner:

"Since you come hither in the hope of regaining through penance the grace of God, which you

lost by sin, I must first of all acquaint you with the commandments of Holy Scripture and the customs of holy Church, lest you should imagine that we act arbitrarily in imposing penances upon you. Since you have done that which God forbids, penance obliges you to abstain from what is permitted. For the first forty days, therefore, the sinner must fast on bread, water, and salt, or, if he have not the strength for this, for three days in the week at least (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday); on the other days he may eat vegetables as well. On Sundays he may partake of whatever he may have, with the exception of meat and wine, and this abstinence must be kept for one year, or for five or seven years, according to the gravity of the sin. He must, however, take his meals alone, not with his fellow-Christians. He must walk barefoot, he must not ride or drive nor frequent the baths, and if not already married he must not marry, and must deem himself unworthy to receive holy communion." Then the priest proceeded to say: "Behold, I expel you this day out of the communion of the Church, as Adam was driven out of paradise because of his sins. Let not the sinner, therefore, enter the church at the time of divine service or of public prayer; let him stand in the porch or outside the door, let him kiss the threshold, and with tears entreat the faithful to pray for him as they go in or pass out."

That was undeniably a very severe penance.

When the penitent had been for a fixed time (sometimes several years) in the class of mourners he was admitted into the class of hearers (*audientes*). He was then permitted to lay aside his penitential garb and enter into the church to hear the word of God and the Christian instruction; but he might not join the body of the faithful; he had to remain in the back part of the church among the catechumens, to learn again the doctrines of the Christian faith, which he was supposed to have forgotten. He had to leave the church after the sermon.

After this other, and often long, period of penance the penitent was received into the class of kneelers (*substrati*). These latter were not allowed to assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, but they took part in the prayers and occupied a place in the nave of the church. When the time came for them to withdraw they threw themselves at the feet of the bishop and the priests who were present, that they might lay their hands upon them and pray for them.

Finally, at the close of a long period of penance and sorrow for sin, absolution was given to the penitents, and they were taken into the class of bystanders (*consistentes*). They were then no longer forbidden to be present at Mass, but they might not receive holy communion until a sufficient time had elapsed to test the sincerity of their penance and amendment of life.

The Advantages which the Living Derive from Indulgences.

It is a very common error to suppose that indulgences are now unnecessary, and even useless, because canonical penances are no longer imposed. But, even setting aside the fact that indulgences are a remission, not merely of ecclesiastical, but of all temporal, penalties, they are still of service to us simply regarded as cancelling ecclesiastical penalties. The old canonical penances were imposed on account of public, open, scandal having been given ; if they are no longer imposed by the Church it does not follow that they are no longer deserved. The sinner who has given scandal to the Christian community merits punishment as much as ever, and if he is not called upon to undergo that punishment he must yet expiate his sin in whatever manner the divine justice may decide, either in this world or in the next. How much many a man who thinks lightly of indulgences really needs them may be seen from the ecclesiastical penances formerly decreed, of which a few are here quoted :

For thoughtlessly injuring the reputation of one's neighbor, a fast of seven days on bread and water.

For breaking the rule of fasting during Lent, seven days' penance for each day on which the law was transgressed. The same for indulging in idle diversions and amusements on Sunday.

For talking during divine service, ten days' fast on bread and water.

For drinking to excess so as to make one's self sick, fifteen days' fast, and afterwards three days' abstinence from wine and flesh-meat.

For neglecting to approach the Lord's table on Holy Thursday, at Easter, Pentecost, and Christmas, twenty days' fast on bread and water.

For wantonly making a man drunk, thirty days' fast.

For not observing the ember-days, forty days' fast.

Parents through whose fault a child did not receive holy Baptism or Confirmation had to atone for their sin by three years of penance ; also a man who wore the dress of a woman or a woman who assumed masculine habiliments, and those who practised usury or who danced on holidays of obligation.

For adultery the term of penance was ten years.

For treason against king or lord, or revolt against episcopal authority the penalty was to be imprisoned for life in a cloister.

These rules bear witness to the severity of ecclesiastical discipline among the early Christians and the strictness of morals required of the faithful. But, it may be objected, if all these penances were enforced for every crime, how many delinquents would have to spend their whole life long at the portals of the Church and fast all their days on bread and water, in sackcloth and ashes! By means of indulgences, we answer, they would not merely

be released from the punishment they deserved, but they would be reminded of their sinfulness and filled with abhorrence of sin. On this point the holy Council of Trent speaks thus:

"Whereas the power of granting indulgences was given by Christ to the Church, and from the earliest times she has made use of this power, committed to her by God, this holy Synod teaches and commands that the use of indulgences, which is most salutary for Christian people and sanctioned by the authority of the holy Councils, is to be retained in the Church." (Sess. xxv.)

The Jubilee Indulgence.

The most ample indulgence is the jubilee indulgence, which was formerly granted at stated times by the Popes to those who should visit the holy places in Rome. It is called by the name of *jubilee* (joyful sound) for the same reason as the Jews called each fiftieth year the year of jubilee. In that year all debts were cancelled among the Hebrews, property that had been acquired by purchase reverted to the original owner, and Hebrew slaves bought since the last jubilee year were set free. In like manner this indulgence remits all temporal punishment without exception, and confers various privileges, both upon the penitent and also upon the confessor in regard to giving absolution.

The first jubilee indulgence was granted in 1300

by Pope Boniface VIII. on account of the exceptionally large number of pilgrims who were that year in Rome. This was to recur every hundredth year, but Clement VI., the fifth successor of the afore-named Pope, caused the second jubilee to be celebrated in 1350, in consideration of the brevity of human life. He also decreed that the jubilee indulgence was to be granted every fiftieth year, after the fashion of the Old Testament jubilee. In 1391 Pope Boniface IX. extended this indulgence to some of the principal towns of Germany. But the interval of fifty years being too long to assure to all Christians a participation in the benefits of the jubilee, the cycle was reduced by three Popes, Gregory IX., Urban VI., and Pius V., to a period of thirty-three years, in memory of the thirty-three years of Our Lord's life on earth. Finally, Pope Paul II. decreed that for the future a general indulgence should be granted every twenty-five years. In the year 1475 the jubilee was extended to all orthodox Christians throughout the world, without limitation to the city of Rome, and this still continues to be the rule.

During the term of jubilee ordinary confessors are empowered to absolve from all sins and canonical penalties, even in cases usually reserved to the bishop or the Pope. They have also power to absolve from vows of almost every kind or commute them into some other good work. The jubilee confession may be made to any confessor whatso-

ever, provided he be a priest duly authorized by his bishop. The conditions for gaining an ordinary jubilee are (1) contrite confession of sin; (2) a worthy reception of holy communion; (3) a visit to one or more churches, determined by the bishop; (4) prayer for the Holy Father's intention.

The paschal communion does not fulfil the conditions of the indulgence, but the Easter confession serves for the purpose.

Elsewhere than in Rome at the time of the jubilee all other indulgences cease to be in force, excepting only those that are applicable to the holy souls and those that are granted to the dying.

There are also extraordinary jubilees which the Supreme Pontiffs are wont to grant on special occasions, such as their assumption of the tiara, or on account of some particular cause of solicitude, concerning which the divine succor is to be implored; or, again, if there be call for extraordinary thanksgiving, as for deliverance in time of urgent need or the averting of some great peril. In order to obtain these indulgences, as a rule fasting and an alms according to the means of the individual are required, as well as confession, communion, the visit to a church, and prayer.

Here remark: (1) These fasts are binding on those who are otherwise dispensed. (2) On the days specified as fasting-days, milk, butter, and eggs are forbidden, unless a dispensation be obtained. (3) Children who have not yet made their first com-

munion can gain the indulgence if they go to confession. (4) Almsgiving in the case of the poor, and the visit to a church in the case of the sick or prisoners, may be changed for some other good work. (5) The alms given by the master of a household avails for the children and servants.

Further details may be learned from the pastoral letter of the bishop of the diocese, or from the confessor during the time of the jubilee.

Some Indulgences which may be Obtained by Every One without much Difficulty.

1. For those who recite with contrition and devotion the following ascription of praise in honor of the Most Holy Trinity:

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; the earth is full of Thy glory. Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, glory be to the Holy Ghost"—an indulgence of a hundred days once a day; a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions once a month for those who recite it daily during the month. (Clement XIV., 6th June, 1769, and 26th June, 1770.)

2. For those who repeat the *Glory be to the Father*, etc., in the morning, at noon, and at night in honor of the Most Holy Trinity, in thanksgiving for all the grace and privileges conferred upon the Blessed Virgin and more especially at her assumption, an indulgence of one hundred days three times a day; and plenary on the usual conditions once a

month on any day that may be chosen for those who recite it as prescribed daily during a whole month.

3. For those who recite with a contrite and devout heart the following prayers :

"O Sacrament most holy! O Sacrament divine!
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment thine!"

—an indulgence of one hundred days once a day; and if it be recited daily for a month a plenary indulgence once in the month on the ordinary conditions. (Pius VI., 24th May, 1776.)

4. "O sweetest Heart of Jesus! I implore
That I may ever love Thee more and more!"

—three hundred days' indulgence every time of recital, and plenary once a month on any day that may be chosen if recited daily. Conditions: confession, communion, visit to a church, prayer for the Holy Father's intentions. (Pius IX., 26th November, 1876.)

5. To all who recite with contrite and devout heart the acts of faith, hope, and charity an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines each time; plenary once a month on any day that may be chosen, on the usual conditions, if the acts have been recited daily for a month, and in the hour of death for those who have been faithful in practising this devotion during their life.

By a month is meant, not the space of thirty or thirty-one days, but the whole of a calendar month, e.g., from the first day of February until the last.

6. All who with contrite and devout dispositions visit an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus exposed for public veneration in a church or chapel or upon an altar, and pray before that image for a short space of time for the intentions of the Holy Father, gain an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines. (Pius VI., 2d January, 1799.)

7. "Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen."

Three hundred days for each recital of the above prayer with contrition and devotion; a plenary indulgence once a month on any day that may be chosen for saying it at least once daily during the month. Conditions: confession, communion, visit to a church, prayer for the Holy Father's intentions. (Pius IX., 11th December, 1846.)

8. "Sweet heart of Mary, be my salvation!"

Three hundred days each time of repetition. (Pius IX., 30th September, 1852.) At the same time

the same Pope granted a plenary indulgence once a month to all who should repeat the above ejaculation daily during a month, the conditions being confession, communion, visit to a church, prayer for the Pope's intentions.

9. "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you."

Three hundred days each time. (Pius VII., 28th April, 1807.)

10. "St. Joseph, friend of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!"

One hundred days once a day for all the faithful who shall repeat this prayer once daily. (Pius IX., 2d June, 1874.)

These indulgences are all applicable to the souls in purgatory.

Practical Application.

1. Praiseworthy though it undoubtedly is to gain indulgences in order thereby to participate in the merits of Christ and obtain remission of temporal punishment, yet we must, as our primary aim, endeavor to make ourselves worthy to receive these graces. Otherwise we should, like Peter, cast out our nets and take nothing. It is not the external works, indispensable as they are, that procure the indulgence, but a penitent disposition of heart.

2. Our conscience often has cause to accuse us

of having been unkind, unjust, rude towards those who are now departed; of having offended or vexed them. If it were possible we would gladly ask their pardon and make amends to them, but it is no longer in our power to do this, for they are dead. The system of indulgences affords us a means of at least to some extent making reparation for the wrong we have done. In regard to parents and benefactors, simple gratitude renders it our duty to be diligent in gaining indulgences on their behalf.

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

"JESUS, having loved His own who were in the world, loved them unto the end." (John xiii. 1.) These words apply just as fully to the institution of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction as to that of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. The grace of our divine Lord accompanies the Christian throughout his whole life; from the time of his Baptism until he draws his last breath it does not forsake him. It supports him in the last most terrible hour, for it administers to him the holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction by the hands of the priest, Christ's representative.

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction is that sacrament in which by anointing with consecrated oil the organs of sense, the hands and feet, of one who is dangerously sick he is delivered from sin and the remains of sin and is either restored to bodily health or imbued with courage and fortitude to encounter the terrors of death. Thus St. James says: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the

"They anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them."—Mark vi. 13.



"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church."—James v. 14.

EXTREME UNCTION.

THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION.

REFLECTION.—God, in His infinite goodness, has given to His Church sacraments adapted to all our wants, not only during life, but also at the hour of our death, that terrible moment on which our eternity depends. By Baptism we are born for heaven, by Confirmation we are made strong, by the Holy Eucharist we are fed, by Penance we are cured of our wounds or even restored to the life of grace, and by the Sacrament of Extreme Unction we are prepared to die with a holy resignation to the divine will, and enabled to overcome the final efforts of Satan to make us lose our soul. This sacrament has even the power to restore the sick to health, if it is conducive to their salvation. Thus from our birth to our death the Church furnishes us with all the requisite means of salvation, so that, if we are lost, it will not be for want of grace on the part of God, but through our own fault and neglect.

PRACTICE.—Let us daily beseech God for the grace to die a holy death, fortified with the Sacraments of Penance, the Holy Eucharist and Extreme Unction. That we may be fit to obtain this priceless favor, let us strive to avoid every sin that may endanger our salvation. It is a pious custom to pray daily for those persons who are in their agony, that they may depart this life in the state of grace.

PRAYER.—O my God, since the hour of my death is uncertain and may come at any moment, I am resolved to avoid every grievous sin and its occasions. Grant me the grace, when my last hour draws nigh, to be strengthened by the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, the Holy Eucharist and Extreme Unction, so that, when I appear before Thee to be judged, I may find in Thee a merciful judge. O Mary, pray for me now and at the hour of my death. Amen.

Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." (James v. 14, 15.)

1. These words of the apostle convey to us at once a behest and a promise. We are commanded if any one among us is sick, to fetch the priests of the Church. The priests are commanded to pray over the sick man, to anoint him with oil; succor both spiritual and physical is promised to the sick, forgiveness of sin, and strength (raising up) through the supernatural grace which proceeds from God alone. Here we have a sacramental supernatural grace, which accompanies a visible sign, viz., the unction with oil. It would be lost labor to search out the time when Our Lord instituted this sacrament, for had it not been instituted by Him the apostles would not have ordered it to be received, nor could they have promised the grace it conveys.

2. The visible sign is the unction with oil (the oil being specially consecrated for this purpose by the bishop on Holy Thursday) with this form of words: "Through this holy unction, and through His most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by seeing, hearing, smelling, taste, and speech. Amen."

Oil was chosen as the visible sign in this sacrament by Jesus Christ for the same reason that water was chosen for Baptism. As water signifies the grace conferred by the Sacrament of Baptism

upon the soul, so oil signifies what is the operation of the sacrament upon the sick who receive it. The Roman Catechism says: "As oil does much towards the mitigation of physical pain, so this sacrament has virtue to alleviate spiritual sorrow and distress. Oil, moreover, restores to health; it is a cause of cheerfulness, for it is the nutriment of light. It also has the property of restoring strength to wearied limbs. All this is symbolical of the effect of divine grace within the soul of the sick man when this sacrament is administered."

3. This sacrament is called *extreme* unction—the Christian receives the first unction at Baptism, the second when he is confirmed and the anointing of the sick is the last unction which Christ has authorized the Church to give. Consequently this sacrament has been called by the Fathers the consummation—the ending, that is—of the Christian life. The expression "extreme or last unction" is also intended to remind the sick man who is in danger of death that this sacrament was appointed for his succor and solace.

4. Every orthodox Christian can receive this sacrament if he has come to years of discretion and is capable of committing sin. Thus it can be administered to children who have not yet made their first communion, but who can go to confession. Only those who are really sick may receive it, among whom are included the aged suffering from the infirmities of years, because senile decay is in

itself an illness. But it must not be given to persons in health who are about to expose themselves, or who actually are exposed, to danger of death, nor to criminals before their execution, nor to those who are from their birth imbecile or demented, unless they have lucid intervals. But the sacrament must not be denied to the insane if they formerly had the gift of reason. It is to be administered to all who are at the point of death, even if they are in a state of unconsciousness and have expressed no desire for the sacrament, provided they have led a Christian life: for we must act upon the supposition that they would have desired it had they been in possession of their senses.

5. The Christian finding himself in danger of death is bound under pain of sin to receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, if this is possible—because every one is bound to make use of all the means appointed for his soul's salvation, and by not receiving it he gives scandal and shows disrespect towards the sacrament. On this account it is the duty of the sick man's relatives to send for the priest when the right time comes, thereby following the beautiful example of the sisters of Lazarus, who sent to Jesus, saying: "Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick." (John xi. 3.)

6. It appertains to the office of a priest to administer Extreme Unction, since to priests alone do the words of St. Paul refer: "Let a man so ac-

count of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1.)

The Church anathematizes every one who ventures to assert that by the priests the apostle James mentions we are not to understand those ministers who have been duly ordained and admitted to the priesthood by the bishop. In the whole of the Church's annals no single instance is to be met with of any one else administering the holy oils.

7. The sacramental grace which is conveyed to the soul of the sick, in addition to sanctifying grace, is of a threefold nature:

a. Granted contrition of heart, venial sins are forgiven and mortal sins are blotted out, even if the sick man is unconscious or deprived of the power of speech, so as to be unable to make his confession.

b. The remains of sin are wiped away in proportion to the depth of the contrition. By these are meant proneness of the heart to evil and infirmity of will. Moreover, theologians tell us that, according to the dispositions of the individual, more or less of the temporal penalties due to him are remitted.

c. The sick man is strengthened, so as more easily to resist temptations in the hour of death, to bear patiently the pains of sickness, and to pass through his last agony with resignation. Thus physical death is for the just the entrance to eternal life, whereas for the sinner death in time is the

commencement of death for all eternity. The Sacrament of Extreme Unction robs death of its terrors, the grave of its victory.

8. Sometimes a corporal benefit is attached to the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, namely, the recovery of health. This effect is, however, only a qualified one, for sooner or later the body must die, and by recovery from illness death may be postponed for a time, not averted altogether. It is the will of God that the sinner should be converted; it is also His will that all men should die and pay their tribute to death. Thus restoration to health is quite independent of forgiveness of sin, and the latter may be conferred without the former. The former is a gift dependent on the will of God, the worthiness of the individual, and the measure of his faith.

9. By the "prayer of faith" is meant the prayer which accompanies the unction with oil. The effect of this prayer may be increased by the faith of the priest and of the bystanders. For since, as we are taught to believe, every member of the Church participates in the merits of all the members collectively, so the sick man shares in the blessings called down from above by the prayers of those who are present. We know, besides, that God often grants to the prayers of the just graces which He would not otherwise bestow. This is unquestionably apparent from the story of the healing of the paralytic who was brought in a bed to Jesus. As the men who carried him could not bring him

in because of the multitude, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed into the midst before Jesus. Thereupon, it is expressly stated, "whose faith when Jesus saw [the faith, that is, of the men who brought him] He said, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." (Luke v. 20.) Hence we see that the faith of relatives and others who are present, as well as of the priest, has power to augment divine grace.

10. The name of the sacrament, "Extreme Unction," reminds us of the end of life, and consequently it often happens that the sick are alarmed if it is mentioned to them and their relatives shrink from urging them to receive it. That is of a truth false kindness ; it proves, too, a great want of faith, which is the most important requisite for the reception of this sacrament. In such a case the Saviour's words are applicable : "A man's enemies shall be they of his own household." (Matt. x. 36.)

As the sick man must be spiritually alive, must, that is, be in a state of grace, he ought, before he is anointed, to cleanse his soul in the Sacrament of Penance and receive the sacred viaticum. For this he must be in a condition of perfect consciousness and able to make acts of the theological virtues, of contrition and compunction. Only in exceptional cases can excuses be made for not summoning the priest in time, when unconsciousness sets in suddenly and unexpectedly. The Roman Catechism says : "Those persons do very

wrong who wait to have the sick anointed until all hope of their recovery is at an end, their senses begin to grow dim, and the dulness of death creeps over them; for it adds immeasurably to the amount of grace received by the sick man if he be anointed with the holy oils while in full possession of his senses and understanding, and while he can join in the prayers with faith and fervent sincerity of heart."

11. Although the Sacrament of Extreme Unction must only be received once in one and the self-same illness, yet it may be received again in other illnesses or in different dangerous crises of the same. Thus it belongs to those sacraments which can be received more than once.

12. The eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, and feet are anointed, as being the organs and instruments of the five senses wherewith we have transgressed.

Historical Evidence.

Shortly after Our Lord had chosen His apostles He sent them out and gave them power over unclean spirits. The apostles, going forth, preached that men should do penance, and prepared their minds for the reception of Christ's doctrine. "And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." (Mark vi. 13.) This anointing has no connection with the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. It is simply an

anointing with consecrated oil; such may be performed by any orthodox Christian, and in former times was often performed, for consecrated oil is one of the sacramentals, like holy water.

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction may not be dispensed even by deacons, but by priests only. In all the Churches of the East, the Greek, Armenian, Coptic, Nestorian, and others, this anointing of the sick is one of the sacraments—a sure proof that it is not an arbitrary institution of the Catholic Church. In the Greek Church, however, three or seven priests take part in administering the oils. In earlier times it was customary to repeat the unction for seven consecutive days. The Church of Rome has modified the ritual in order that the sick man may have the graces of the sacrament all the sooner, since it is always a matter of difficulty, often of impossibility, to procure the presence of so many priests.

The Order of Administering Extreme Unction.

If one who is sick is to receive Extreme Unction let notice be given as soon as possible to the parish priest, or his substitute, in order that a time may be fixed which will suit his convenience as well as that of the sick man. The latter should then prepare himself carefully, since as a general rule he ought to receive the Sacraments of Penance and of the Altar previously, to make sure of his being in a

state of grace. Those who attend upon the sick man must wash his face, hands, and feet, change his linen and, if possible, that which is on the bed as well. Let the room also be aired and put in order and everything unpleasant to the sight removed. Then let a table be placed in the room, covered with a clean linen cloth, with a crucifix upon it, and two, or at least one, burning taper. Let fine pieces of cotton-wool (or some similar substance) be placed in readiness upon a plate, with a piece of soft bread, salt, a handkerchief, a vessel containing holy water, and a glass of plain water.

When the priest enters the sick-room with the Most Holy Sacrament let the attendants meet him at the door, carrying lighted tapers; then kneel down and recite the Rosary at a distance while the sick man's confession is heard. If the priest does not bring the Blessed Sacrament the candles need not be lighted until the confession is ended. Then let those who are present remain on their knees while the holy unction is administered. When the ceremony is over it is well to leave the sick man alone for a short space of time, that he may make his thanksgiving, or, if he be unable to do so himself, some assistance may be rendered to him. The bread, the salt, and the wool with which the priest has wiped his fingers must be thrown into the fire, and the handkerchief must be washed before being used for any other purpose.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders.

As the proneness to sin was handed down from generation to generation of mankind, it was necessary that, as an antidote thereto, the means of grace should also be handed down. For this reason Our Lord founded a Church and instituted a priesthood, whereby the graces of redemption might be dispensed to the faithful. Those who are called to the priesthood receive in the Sacrament of Holy Orders authority and power to dispense the means of grace.

The Sacrament of Holy Orders is the sacrament whereby sacerdotal power is given to those who receive it, and special grace conferred for the right exercise of their sacred ministry.

1. Even in primeval ages, before the written law was given to the Jews, before the days of Moses, there existed among all nations, both religious beliefs and acts of divine worship and of sacrifice, and accordingly persons who in virtue of their office performed those acts, and were on that account held in particular veneration by the people as being the chosen ministers of God. Melchisedech, king of Salem, who offered bread and wine, was one

of these ministers, for it is said of him, "He was the priest of the most high God." (Gen. xiv. 18.) As we meet with no nation without sacrifices, so we meet with no nation that has not priests.

2. In the time of the written law the priesthood was instituted by God Himself. Immediately after the ten commandments had been given to the children of Israel the Lord showed Moses how the tabernacle was to be made, prescribed the ceremonial of divine worship, and chose Aaron, with his sons Nadab, Abiu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, to be priests. Moses was commanded to anoint them with the sacred oil of unction and with the blood of a sacrificial victim. (Lev. viii. 30.) "And after Aaron had offered sacrifice, stretching forth his hands to the people, he blessed them. And thus he finished the victims for sin, and the holocausts and the peace-offerings." (Lev. ix. 22.) It was the office of the priests alone to look to all things that appertained to the service of the altar and were within the veil. (Numb. xviii. 7.) In the other duties of the ministry the priests were assisted by the sons of Levi; but the latter were strictly charged, under pain of death, not to presume to do anything which it was the priests' prerogative to do. "They shall not touch the vessels of the sanctuary, lest they die." (Numb. iv. 15.) Now if God Himself appointed a class apart for the service of the sanctuary under the Old Dispensation, what wonder if He confided the administration of the sacraments

of the New Testament, especially the sacraments of reconciliation—that is to say, the Sacraments of Penance and of the Altar—only to priests chosen for and consecrated to this office?

3. Our Lord came into this world to offer the greatest of all sacrifices, to offer Himself to His heavenly Father. He is the "priest according to the order of Melchisedech." (Ps. cix. 4.) This sacrificial office will remain in the Church until the end of time; consequently the priesthood must continue throughout all ages of the Church's existence. Our Lord instituted Holy Orders at the Last Supper, when He said to the disciples: "This is My body, which was given for you; this is My blood, which was shed for you. Do this in commemoration of Me." (Luke xxii. 19, 20.) The work of reconciliation also, which consists in the forgiveness of sins, must, in consideration of human infirmity, be carried on throughout all time for the benefit of the repentant sinner. For this cause on the very day of Our Lord's Resurrection the apostles received the Holy Ghost and were given authority for this intent: "Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (John xx. 23.) The apostles were to exercise this power as the representatives of Christ, for He expressly said to them: "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." (John xx. 21.) Thus the apostles became Christ's representatives.

4. In the Sacrament of Holy Orders the external sign is the imposition of hands and the prayer pronounced by the bishop, the delivering to the recipients of ordination the paten with the Host and the chalice with the wine, besides the anointing of the hands, which are to be instrumental in performing the sacred rites. When the Holy Ghost said to those who were set over the Church at Antioch: "Separate Me Saul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have taken them," they, fasting and praying, and imposing their hands on them, sent them away. (Acts xiii. 1–3.) Then Paul and Barnabas made themselves ready for their missionary journey. They in their turn ordained and appointed some of the elder men over every community wherever they went, with fasting and prayer. Timothy did the same at Ephesus, and we find St. Paul warning him to be prudent in the choice of priests: "Impose not hands lightly upon any man," he writes to him in his first epistle. (1 Tim. v. 22.) He also exhorts him thus: "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood." (1 Tim. iv. 14.) And again: "I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God which is in thee by the imposition of my hands." (2 Tim. i. 6.) Hence we see that God has attached to the laying on of hands, the outward sign, an inward sanctifying grace. Here, then, is all that which constitutes a sacrament.

5. The writings of the Fathers of the Church

and the utterances of the Councils leave no doubt as to the imposition of the apostles' hands being no mere supplication to obtain the divine benediction, but a real sacramental act. St. Jerome distinctly calls it the Sacrament of Ordination, and it was accompanied by the same operations of grace that necessarily accompany a sacrament, and a sacrament only. If it be alleged in contradiction to this that St. Peter speaks of all believing Christians without exception as a kingly priesthood, a holy nation (1 Pet. ii. 9), we answer that these words are to be understood in the same sense as those which God spoke to the Israelites: You shall be to Me a priestly kingdom, a holy nation. All the faithful cannot be priests, any more than all the Israelites could be kings. But just as the people of Israel constituted a priestly kingdom, so the faithful form a kingly priesthood, the body of the Church, whose head is Jesus Christ, the bishop of our souls. (1 Pet. ii. 25.) St. Paul, addressing the believers, says expressly: "You are the body of Christ, and members of member. And God indeed hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly doctors. . . . Are all apostles, are all prophets, are all doctors?" (1 Cor. xii. 27-29.) Thus the Apostle himself testifies that there are diversities of ministries in the Church instituted by God Himself.

It is true that in Holy Scripture those who under the New Testament were in authority over

the Christian congregation are termed *elders* (*presbyteri*, whence comes the name of priest). The reason of this is not far to seek: As long as the Christians were to a great extent mixed up with the Jews it was not thought expedient to call the Christian ministers by the same name as the Jewish lest they should be mistaken one for the other. But as soon as the Temple and the service of the Temple were at an end those who were the dispensers of the holy mysteries received the same designation as that borne by those who served the altar under the Old Covenant, *sacerdotes*, or sacred gifts—that is, those who are consecrated to the service of God. The successors of the apostles were called *episcopi*—bishops or overseers over the ordinary priests. That there was a great difference between the authority exercised by the bishop and that exercised by the ordinary priest, and that this difference was recognized at the time the epistles were written, cannot be denied.

6. Holy Orders, like Baptism and Confirmation, imprint upon the soul an indelible character. St. Augustine says: Baptism and Holy Orders give a certain consecration to him who receives them, and therefore neither the one nor the other can be received more than once. Consequently apostate priests, if they repent and return to the Church, are not reordained. Ordination by the bishops of the Eastern Church, which is schismatical, but not heretical, is recognized as valid, because the for-

mularies in use before the schism are still retained. It is otherwise with the bishops of the Anglican Church ; they have no power to ordain.

7. That it is the special prerogative of bishops to ordain priests, and that simple priests possess no such powers, is a doctrine taught by the Fathers and confirmed by Councils. Were a priest to presume to arrogate to himself this power he would not only perform an unlawful act, but his ordination would be utterly invalid; the recipient thereof would be in all respects the same as he was before.

With Holy Orders when administered by a rightful bishop the ordained receive power to exercise all functions appertaining to the priesthood. Here we must observe that forgiving sins is a judicial as well as a sacerdotal act, to effect which it is necessary to obtain special faculties from the ecclesiastical authority, i.e., the bishop. As the bishop has the right for weighty reasons to suspend a priest for a time from the exercise of his sacred ministry, so he has power to authorize a priest to exercise all his priestly functions with the exception of administering the Sacrament of Penance. In virtue of the obedience he promises to his ecclesiastical superiors a priest is obliged to serve in the vineyard of the Lord wherever his bishop may send him ; nor may he quit his post without the bishop's sanction. Hence it follows that in the exercise of his sacerdotal powers the priest is sub-

ject only to the bishop's authority; no one else can give them, and no one else can forbid him to employ them. The civil authority may forcibly prevent a priest from exercising his powers, but it is impotent to deprive him of them or to render their operation invalid. Nor is it able to grant sacerdotal powers to a layman or episcopal powers to a priest.

The High Dignity of the Sacerdotal Office, and the Respect which is due to Priests.

The saintly bishop and martyr Ignatius of Antioch says: "The dignity of the priest is marvellous and amazing, lofty, immeasurable, and infinite." And St. Jerome says: "Although the powers of the priesthood are exercised on earth, they are to be reckoned among heavenly things."

St. Ephrem of Syria exclaims: "O wondrous miracle, power inexpressible, awful mystery of the priesthood! It is a mystic and sacred calling, a sublime and exalted office, which since the coming of Christ to earth it is granted to us unworthy mortals to fill! It is a shield resplendent beyond compare, an impenetrable wall, a foundation firm and immovable, extending from earth to heaven. Words fail me to extol aright the vast dignity of the priesthood; it surpasses all we can pray for, all we can understand, all we can imagine."

From the testimonies of these holy men, of which a great number might be adduced, it will be seen how exalted was the idea entertained of the priestly office by the early Christians, and how great was the veneration in which they held those who were chosen by God to stand at His altar. And surely we shall not regard the utterances of these men, who were enlightened by the Holy Ghost, to be exaggerated if we consider

1. That priests are the representatives of Christ, according to His own unequivocal statement: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me." (Luke x. 16.)

St. Chrysostom thus expounds those words: "He that honors the priest honors Christ, and he that despises the priest despises Christ." Wherefore if the representatives of earthly sovereigns are treated with profound respect for the sake of their masters, what honor are we not bound to show to priests, who, in as far as they are concerned with our souls' salvation, are far above the princes and monarchs of this world. They are the true kingly priesthood, the holy nation. (1 Pet. ii. 9.)

2. The priests, as Christ's representatives, are also the dispensers of grace to us mortals, for through their instrumentality we receive all the graces which God in His mercy destines for us, all that we need for the accomplishment in us of the

work of redemption. By them we are cleansed from sin and sanctified in the Sacrament of Baptism and the Sacrament of Penance. By them we are fortified by the communication of the Holy Ghost in the Sacrament of Confirmation. By them our souls are nourished with the body and blood of Our Lord. They stand by us in the last awful hour, the hour of death. Their blessing knits the nuptial bond. They awaken the sinner's conscience and bring him back to God; they also comfort those who are cast down and raise them up again. They are the physicians of the soul; in each of them we have a friend, a guide, a guardian angel upon earth. God saves the world through their means. A power is given to them which no angel is privileged to possess, for in the holy sacrifice of the Mass they call down the Son of God to earth and they raise man to heaven above. The Apostle is therefore warranted in saying: "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1.)

The priest is, moreover, our intercessor with God: "Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins." (Heb. v. 1.)

The priest does not usurp this office of himself, he is called by God to fill this exalted post: "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself,

but he that is called of God, as Aaron was." (Heb. v. 4.) Accordingly in the ordination service the bishop reminds the candidates for the priesthood of Our Lord's words: "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." (John xv. 16.)

3. Priests are our teachers, who instruct us in all things belonging to salvation. They are the pastors appointed by God to lead and guide us in the right way. Jesus, the chief shepherd, has entrusted us to their care, and for us they will have to give account. It behooves us to obey them, as the Apostle admonishes us: "Obey your prelates and be subject to them. For they watch as being to render an account of your souls; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief." (Heb. xiii. 17.) The more we honor our priests, obey them, support them in all their work, the greater will be the blessing attendant on their labors, the more glorious the fruit which the priesthood will produce. The enemy of the priest is the enemy of Christ.

4. And as in all things that are commanded us it is possible to act contrary to the will of God, so a man may thrust himself into the priesthood without being called. To do so is a grievous sin; it may be termed a perpetual act of sacrilege. Therefore let all aspirants to the priesthood examine themselves seriously to ascertain whether they are really called thereto. Nor should they content themselves with looking into their own hearts, but let them take counsel of some discreet person, their

confessor above all, and their spiritual superiors, for the eyes of others are not unfrequently sharper than our own, and are able to detect failings which we ourselves do not perceive.

There are, however, several tests by which a man can discern whether his vocation be a true one. For instance, one who is enslaved by some bad habit, and lacks resolution of will or feels he has not the power to rid himself of it, is not fit for the priesthood.

Even under the Old Dispensation it was decreed that "whosoever of the seed of Aaron, the priest, has a blemish shall not approach to offer sacrifices to the Lord." (Lev. xxi. 21.) Any one who is compelled to acknowledge to himself that he is devoid of the spirit of devotion and piety indispensable for the functions of the sacred ministry certainly has no vocation to it. We read that Moses of old said to Aaron: "This is what the Lord hath spoken: I will be sanctified in them that approach to Me, and I will be glorified in the sight of all the people." (Lev. x. 3.)

Nor are those truly called to the priesthood who seek admission to that holy state, not out of the love of God, but for the sake of temporal advantage, as a means of getting their living, in view of soon obtaining some lucrative post, promotion to high dignities, from family consideration, or some such motive. He who aspires to be a priest ought to be actuated by the wish to serve God out of pure

love, without any secondary object. He ought to be prepared to forsake father, mother, relatives, riches, honors, and all the pleasures of life, if necessary, and say with Peter: "Behold we have left all things and have followed Thee." (Matt. xix. 27.)

It would be wrong for any one, even from the best of motives, to seek admission to the sacerdotal state without possessing the knowledge necessary for this high calling, for priests ought to be the teachers of the Christian flock, well read in Holy Writ, well acquainted with the claims of the Church and the duties of her children, well able to proclaim the word of God and refute errors. "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is the angel of the Lord of hosts." (Mal. ii. 7.)

5. Parents who force their sons to take Holy Orders in order later on to gain some advantage for themselves or their families, or from any other base and interested motive, are no less to blame than the men who thrust themselves unworthily into the priesthood. By acting in this manner parents become responsible for whatever sins their sons may commit, whatever scandal they may give. Of them it may be said: "They are blind, and leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit." (Matt. xv. 14.)

6. The following are infallible notes of a true vocation to the priesthood: delight in prayer and divine worship, abhorrence of all that is evil, an

earnest desire to serve God in the person of one's neighbor, pleasure in the study of Holy Scripture, intense love for the Catholic Church, together with encouragement on the part of enlightened priests and the consent of ecclesiastical superiors.

He who embraces the sacerdotal state from right motives and from pure love of God will exercise the powers of this high calling for the benefit of mankind in general and the welfare of his own soul in particular. He will seek neither riches nor dignities; his reward awaits him in heaven. God Himself will be his reward; He will say to him as to Abraham of old: "I am thy protector, and thy reward exceeding great." (Gen. xv. 1.)

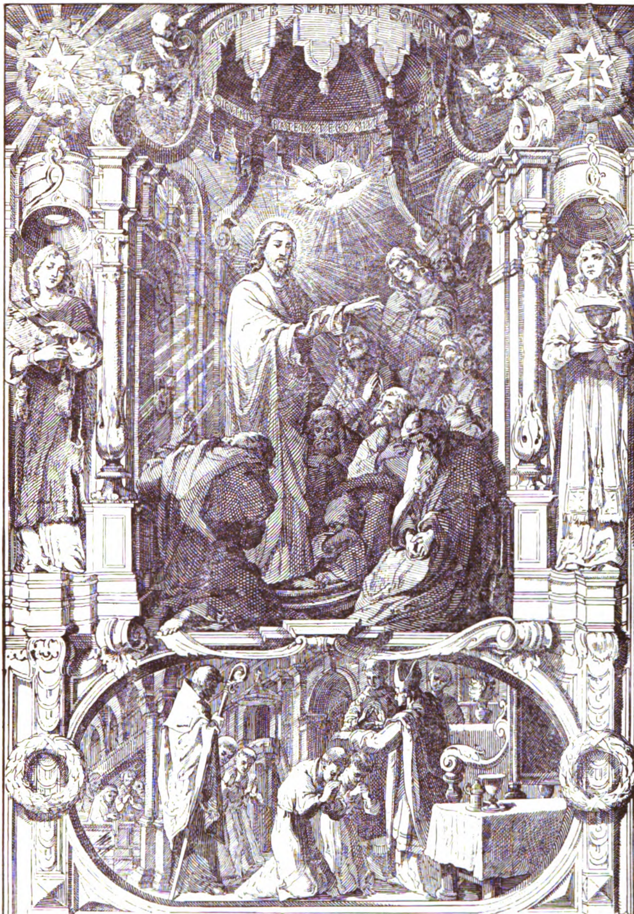
The Ceremonial of Ordination.

When those who are called to serve God in the sacred ministry of the altar have passed through the six grades which lead up to the priesthood, and have duly prepared themselves by the reception of the holy Sacrament of Penance, they are presented to the bishop by a priest of some standing, who fulfils the duties of an archdeacon. This is done during the celebration of Mass, immediately after the reading of the Epistle. The bishop makes special inquiries as to the worthiness of the candidates presented to him, and upon the archdeacon replying that, as far as human frailty allows, he both knows and testifies them to be worthy of the burden

of the office he proceeds to address the candidates. The litany of the saints is then recited, after which they go up to the bishop and kneel before him two and two. He lays both hands on the head of each individual, and all the priests present—of whom there must be at least three—do the same in turn. The bishop then crosses the stole over the chest of each of the recipients of ordination, and vests him in the chasuble, which is worn hanging down in front, but rolled up behind. The hymn *Veni Creator Spiritus* is then intoned. The bishop meanwhile anoints both the hands of each candidate, which are held out side by side, the bishop drawing a line from the thumb of the right hand to the first finger of the left, and again from the thumb of the left hand to the first finger of the right, with the prayer that by this unction God would consecrate and sanctify the hands of the priest, as the representative of Christ, that whatever they bless may be blessed, and whatever they sanctify may remain sanctified. The paten with the Host and the chalice containing the wine, are then delivered to the newly-ordained, while the bishop addresses to each one the words: "Receive power to sacrifice to God and offer Mass, as well for the living as for the dead, in the name of the Lord. Amen."

The newly consecrated priests, making immediate use of the powers conferred on them, celebrate Mass with the bishop, repeating the words of the canon with him from the Offertory onward; at the

"As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you."—John xx. 21.



"He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me."—Luke x. 16.

HOLY ORDERS.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDER.

REFLECTION.—To perpetuate in His Church the means of leading men to heaven, our divine Saviour instituted the Sacrament of Holy Orders, by which priests are ordained and bishops consecrated. Their mission is to continue and perpetuate on earth the work of the redemption. The priest is a second Christ, for, like Christ, he preaches the Gospel, offers to God the sacrifice of the New Law—the holy sacrifice of the Mass, feeds and governs the flock of Christ, forgives sins, changes the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ, and administers the sacraments. No created dignity equals the dignity of the priesthood, for it is invested with powers truly divine, and represents Jesus Christ on earth.

PRACTICE.—Let us revere and obey our holy Father the Pope, as we would Jesus Christ Himself, for he is Christ's vicar on earth, having received from Him through St. Peter the supreme power to rule and govern the whole flock of Christ. Let us revere, obey and pray for our bishop, for God has given him charge over us; let us revere, obey and pray for our pastor also, for to him is entrusted the immediate care of our soul, and he is bound to devote for our spiritual welfare his talents, his energy, his time and even his very life. Let us be grateful to our ecclesiastical superiors and refrain from criticising them and causing them pain.

PRAYER.—O my divine Saviour, I thank Thee for having instituted the priesthood in Thy Church to represent Thee on earth, to continue Thy work and to feed and govern Thy flock. Bless our holy Father the Pope, our bishop, our pastor, and grant them all the graces they need to discharge their office faithfully. O Mary, obtain for me the grace always to be a dutiful child of the Catholic Church. Amen.

communion they receive the Sacrament from the bishop's hands. They next repeat the Creed, and the bishop again lays his hands on the head of each one of them, saying: "Receive the Holy Ghost; whose sins thou shalt forgive they are forgiven him, and whose sins thou retainest they are retained."

The chasuble, which was rolled up upon the back of the newly ordained priests, is now let down to its full length, as a token that they are now invested with the plenitude of the sacerdotal power, the bishop saying meanwhile: "May the Lord clothe thee with the garment of innocence."

A very important part of the ceremony now follows: The newly made priest, kneeling before the bishop, places his hands in the hands of the bishop, who asks him: "Dost thou promise reverence and obedience to me and to my successors?" The newly ordained answers: "I promise it." Then the bishop embraces him, saying: "The peace of the Lord be always with thee." Thus a covenant is made between priest and bishop; the priest stands by the bishop as his assistant; the bishop indicates to him his sphere of work in the Lord's vineyard, which he must not abandon without permission. Finally, the bishop delivers a short exhortation to those whom he has ordained.

Practical Application.

1. Let the Catholic ever bear in mind the words of the son of Sirach: "With all thy soul fear the Lord, and reverence His priests." (Ecclus. vii. 31.) Let him, therefore, never be wanting in those outward marks of respect which it is usual to pay to the clergy. Those priests are to be held in special reverence who perform their duties in a conscientious manner; as the Apostle says: "Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor: especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." (1 Tim. v. 17.)

There are, unhappily, some priests who are forgetful of their duty and whose conduct causes scandal. But a good Catholic will never show disrespect even to such as those, for they are consecrated to God, and the sacraments they administer have no less virtue, the graces are no less efficacious, than when they are dispensed by more worthy ministers. In every class of men there must be some faulty individuals, and many things are regarded as faults in a priest which in a layman would not be considered as blameworthy.

Above all, let us beware of talking about the imperfections of priests, of finding fault with their sermons, their arrangements, their directions, and thereby diminishing their usefulness and the esteem in which they are held. If a priest wrongs any one he has ecclesiastical superiors who will see that justice is done.

2. Outward marks of respect ought to be accompanied by inward affection. A good Christian feels love for his priests and prays for them. He implores for them of God the enlightenment, power, and force that they need. Moreover, he is constant in prayer that the Lord may send laborers into His vineyard, for the words of the Gospel are no less true now than when they were uttered: "The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest." (Matt. ix. 37, 38.)

3. Although priests ought not to aim at acquiring money and property, yet they must live, and they ought to be provided with means to support them comfortably. A priest cannot now live by the labor of his hands, as St. Paul, who was a tent-maker, did in his day; all his time, his energy, his skill must be devoted to the service of the souls confided to his charge.

St. Paul himself allows: "So also the Lord ordained that they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 14.) Therefore let the pious Catholic contribute willingly and largely to the support of his pastor, in order to place him in a position to help the sick and needy, and that it may be said of him, as it was said of his divine Master: "He went about doing good." (Acts x. 38.)

The Sacrament of Matrimony.

CHRISTIAN society ought to be a holy society, therefore its members ought to be sanctified. For this reason God has appointed a means of grace which provides for the propagation of this society and at the same time for its sanctification.

Matrimony is that sacrament whereby an indissoluble and sacred union is contracted between two persons of opposite sexes, and grace is given them to enable them to live together in a Christian manner and bring up their children in the fear of God.

Marriage is a natural union for life between man and woman, and as such was instituted by God in paradise. As it was intended for the propagation of the human race, God implanted in the nature of man a desire for it. Marriage was also destined to be a means of mutual help for the contracting parties.

After God had created Adam He said: "It is not good for man to be alone: let us make him a help like unto himself." (Gen. ii. 18.) And He caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and took

one of his ribs and filled up the place with flesh. "And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." (Gen. ii. 22–24.) "And God blessed them, saying: Increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it." (Gen. i. 28.)

Thus we see marriage to have been instituted by God Himself. Here we must remark:

1. Matrimony is the union of *one* man and *one* woman. Their union lost this character, it is true, after the fall, but up to the time of Noe only one instance is recorded of a plurality of wives, that of Lamech, who had two wives. After the deluge polygamy was permitted by God to accelerate the increase and the spread of the human race, but it was exceptional among the Jews. The majority of men had and could have but one wife. The case of a woman having several husbands has never been known. Christ Our Lord, the spiritual restorer of mankind, reinstated matrimony in its former place by raising it to the dignity of a sacrament.

2. Matrimony was, as we have already seen, an *indissoluble* union, since man and wife were but one flesh. When this essential feature of marriage was

obscured by sin, not only among the heathen nations, but also among the Jews, Our Lord Himself established it anew. We read that at one time the Pharisees came to Him, tempting Him, and asked Him: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? Who answering, said to them: Have ye not read, that He who made man from the beginning, made them male and female? And He said: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall be in one flesh; therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. They say to Him: Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away? He saith to them: Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." (Matt. xix. 3–9.)

All dissolution of this union is absolutely forbidden, only a cessation of personal intercourse is permitted; consequently no man can marry a woman who is separated from her husband without incurring the guilt of adultery, even though the cause of the separation was adultery. And as the bond still exists after the separation has taken place, the man who has put away his wife on account of her adul-

tery is not at liberty to take another, or he himself is likewise an adulterer.

3. The unity and the indissolubility of the marriage bond follow as a necessary consequence from the nature of the intercourse of husband and wife, and is equally indispensable on account of the bringing up of the children.

a. Each of the contracting parties in marriage demands for himself or herself the entire and unreserved surrender of the other, with all his or her physical faculties, bodily and mental powers, each one giving himself or herself wholly and solely to the other. For one of the two to suspend this intimate and perfect partnership would be doing a decided wrong to the other. And this injury would often be done if the married did not know beforehand that a severance of their union is unlawful. This is proved by the unhappy example of the sects, which, having fallen away from the Church, permit divorced persons to remarry during the lifetime of their former partners.

b. The training of the children can only be carried on successfully if father and mother regard this as their mutual duty, and look upon their children as pledges of their mutual love, for whom they will have to give account, as of a treasure confided to their charge. How sad it is when married people separate, and one of the two leaves home, without being able and perhaps without being willing to take the children with him or her; or when a family is

broken up, the sons, it may be, going with their father, the daughters remaining with the mother. How painful for the one parent, and for the children, who are thus parted from one another, and compelled to reside in other families, where they are strangers, and to know nothing thenceforward of their own father or mother, as the case may be, towards whom they have solemn duties and who are bound to them by close ties. Is that a marriage such as God instituted, as Christ sanctified?

c. Matrimony is typical of the union of Christ with the Church. Now the union of Christ with the Church is an indissoluble union, and were the nuptial bond not indissoluble it could not be compared to that divinely appointed relation. The Apostle portrays this mutual relationship in the following passage: "The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the Church. He is the saviour of his body. Therefore as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be subject to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. v. 23–27.)

4. Matrimony is also intended for the mutual support and assistance of the two contracting par-

ties. They marry young, and neither knows what the future has in store for him or her. But of one thing they may both be certain, that they will not always remain young and strong ; as years go on they will be subjected to the infirmities and ailments of old age, or their health may fail sooner ; husband or wife may, while still young, be overtaken by some disease or painful infirmity which may occasion a feeling of aversion to arise in the heart of his or her spouse or create impotency for the object of marriage. Under such circumstances the afflicted party becomes dependent on the other for aid, and opportunity is afforded for Christian charity to display itself in all its self-sacrificing zeal. Anything short of this is no Christian marriage. For married people to separate by mutual consent on account of incompatibility of temperament would be the plainest violation of the command: "Ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor to them as to the co-heirs of the grace of life." (1 Pet. iii. 7.)

5. But, as human passions are very strong and the Church is unable to prevent the laws of God from being transgressed, she permits married persons, under certain circumstances, to apply for a separation of bed and board. For this adultery is not necessary : it may be granted in the case of gross ill treatment on either side ; if either husband or wife should apostatize, and thereby the salvation of the partner of his or her life be imperilled ; or for some

other weighty cause. But this separation of bed and board does not, as has been said already, cancel the marriage bond. It must be pronounced by the appointed ecclesiastical tribunal of the diocese if it is to be valid; a decision in the civil court is not enough.

Testimony to the Indissolubility of Marriage.

The Apostle Paul declares: "To them that are married, not I, but the Lord commandeth, that the wife depart not from her husband: and if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. And let not the husband put away his wife." (1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.)

The Fathers of the Church have at all times declared marriage to be indissoluble. Tertullian says: "He alone who joined husband and wife together in wedlock can separate them; and He will sever the bond, not by means of separation, for this He forbids and disallows, but by the hand of death."

St. Jerome says: "The Apostle has thus cut away every plea, and has clearly declared that if a woman marries again while her husband is living she is an adulteress. A husband may be an adulterer, he may be stained with every crime, and may have been left by his wife on account of his sins—yet he still is her husband, and so long as he lives she may not marry another."

Origen says: "As a woman is an adulteress who

lives with another man during the lifetime of her husband even though she goes through the form of marriage with him, so a man who goes through the form of marriage with a divorced woman is not to be called her husband, but an adulterer."

Thus, according to the express declaration of this ancient and venerable ecclesiastical writer, marriage contracted with those who are separated is not lawful wedlock, but a mere pretence of marriage, and consequently an adulterous intercourse.

The decree of the Council of Trent on this point is as follows: "If any one saith that the Church has erred in that she taught, and doth teach, in accordance with the evangelical and apostolical doctrine, that the bond of matrimony cannot be dissolved on account of the adultery of one of the married parties; and that both, or even the innocent one, who gave not occasion to the adultery, cannot contract another marriage during the lifetime of the other; and that he is guilty of adultery who, having put away the adulteress, shall take another wife, as also she, who, having put away the adulterer, shall take another husband, let him be anathema." (Sess. xxiv. can. 7.)

Matrimony in its Character of a Sacrament.

The Apostle Paul says of matrimony: "This is a great sacrament; but I speak in Christ and in the Church." (Eph. v. 32.)

Matrimony is, therefore, a sacred and mystic contract, which Christ raised to be a sacrament in order that the matrimonial state, originally instituted by God, but degraded through sin, might be restored to its primeval dignity.

1. The Sacrament of Matrimony, like every other sacrament, confers on those who receive it, besides an increase of sanctifying grace, other special graces—the grace to preserve inviolate their conjugal fidelity, to bring up their children in the fear of God, to bear patiently the trials of the married state, to live together in peace and concord, that they may mutually labor for their own sanctification and for that of one another. Let them know that as they join hands before the altar so they will have one day to appear before the throne of the immaculate Lamb. In order that they may do this without fear they are strengthened, encouraged, and aided by the grace conveyed in the Sacrament of Matrimony.

2. The visible sign in this sacrament consists of the words of consent uttered by the bridegroom and the bride in presence of the rightful parish priest and two witnesses. To this the sacerdotal benediction should be added. Nuptials which are not concluded in presence of the duly appointed priest or some one authorized to take his place have no claim to validity in countries where the decrees of the Council of Trent on this subject are promulgated. Wherefore all secret marriages, which

before the Council was held were illegal, but not invalid, are now invalid.

3. From this proceeds, as a necessity, that, in those same countries, civil marriages, i.e., marriages contracted only before the registrar, are no marriages in the sight of the Church. It belongs to the secular authorities to prescribe the conditions and confirm the agreements which grant to the persons who are about to enter the married state the free exercise of their civil and political rights; but the arrangement of these secular matters does not constitute marriage. The Holy See has spoken decisively on this point: Matrimony, being one of the seven sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ, is a religious contract. Those persons who are married by the state and not by the Church live in a state of concubinage; they cannot receive absolution in the Sacrament of Penance unless they are prepared to exchange their sinful manner of life for wedlock blessed by the Church. If they will not do this they cannot receive absolution at their last hour and Christian burial will be denied them after death.

Preparation Before Entering the Married State.

He who is desirous of being married will do well to examine himself first of all to ascertain whether he has a vocation for the state of matri-

mony. It is impossible for one who has no vocation to fulfil the duties belonging to that state. Certain physical, mental, and moral qualities are indispensable; otherwise he will be unhappy himself and make his wife and children miserable.

1. Since physical and mental defects are very often hereditary, and, moreover, are apt, in the intimate intercourse between husband and wife, to engender aversion and dislike, those who choose to enter the state of matrimony ought to be in the first place healthy in body and mind. If not it is a foregone conclusion that their marriage will be an unhappy one.

2. As the duty of providing for the wife and children devolves upon the father as the head of the family, no one ought to marry who is not able to furnish means of subsistence for his family. It is a culpable act of imprudence for a man to marry who knows beforehand that the children who may be born to him will lack the necessaries of life, that they will perhaps grow up stunted and sickly and have a lifelong struggle with hunger, poverty, and want. The rich may become poor; but he who has nothing and no prospect of being able to earn a sufficiency knows very well that he cannot keep a family.

3. Since the well-being of human society depends mainly on the manner in which young people grow up, those whose duty it will be to train the

future members of society ought themselves to be well brought up. Consequently those are unfit to marry who are addicted to vices, who are given to bad habits or immoral practices. Children ought to be able to look up to their parents with reverence; they ought not to learn from them what is evil. Let him who contemplates entering the married state strive first of all to bridle his passions, lay aside his evil habits, and become a model of good conduct.

4. In making choice of a partner for life this world's goods ought not to be the one thing looked to, but the possession of estimable qualities of heart and mind, which is of paramount importance; above all to select one who takes the same view of things as one's self, who fears God and can perform efficiently the duties of father or mother as the case may be. It is, of a truth, permissible, nay, advisable, for a man to attach some weight to the fact that his wife has money to help in the burden of the household expenses; but temporal riches ought not to turn the scale, any more than beauty of person. Extravagance or folly will soon run through a considerable property; whereas in the hands of a God-fearing, thrifty married couple a moderate income may, if the blessing of God rests upon it, increase year by year. "A golden ring in a swine's snout, a woman fair and foolish." (Prov. xi. 22.) "A diligent woman is a crown to her husband: and she that doth things worthy of con-

fusion is as rottenness in his bones." (Prov. xii. 4.) "House and riches are given by parents: but a prudent wife is properly from the Lord." (Prov. xix. 14.)

5. The best preparation for the married state is a chaste and virtuous life. Intimate relations with a person of the other sex ought to be avoided until a man is in a position to marry. A long engagement is a severe tax on the virtue of both parties. It is blameworthy if entered upon (*a*) without any real intention of marriage; (*b*) without any immediate prospect of marriage; (*c*) without knowledge or consent of the parents; (*d*) without due regard to public decorum.

6. When the time comes for the betrothed to plight their troth at the altar let them present themselves to the parish priest, in order that he may have the opportunity of ascertaining whether they are sufficiently instructed in the Christian faith, and whether any impediments to the marriage exist, and if so whether they can be removed by a dispensation. The banns of marriage must be published from the pulpit as the law requires, and if a civil contract must precede the religious ceremony the latter must take place not later than the day after, in presence of the duly appointed parish priest and two witnesses who are of age. Meanwhile it is advisable that the betrothed should not reside in the same house, and should avoid all intercourse that might give rise to scandal.

7. Matrimony is a sacrament of the living and can only be received in a state of grace. Wherefore the Church exhorts the faithful before their marriage to confess their sins and devoutly receive holy communion. What is most to be commended, and most in keeping with the dignity of the sacrament, is for the bride and bridegroom to receive the nuptial benediction during or after Mass and to receive holy communion in the Mass. The wedding-day is a day of rejoicing, but the rejoicing should be of a seemly nature. The newly married may make merry with their relatives and their guests if they conduct themselves as becomes Christians; as the Apostle says: "Rejoice in the Lord always." (Phil. iv. 4.) Many Christians might be put to shame by the example of Tobias and Sara, who said to one another: "We are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God." (Tob. viii. 5.)

The Impediments to Marriage.

There are circumstances which render marriage unlawful and circumstances which render marriage invalid. The former are called prohibitive impediments, the latter diriment impediments.

The prohibitive impediments—i.e., those which render marriage unlawful—are:

(1) Previous engagement to another person un-

less the engagement has been lawfully annulled. (2) A simple vow of chastity; that is to say, the vow to preserve one's virginity or to enter a religious congregation. (3) Certain times of the year, for marriage cannot be solemnized during Advent or Lent. (4) The marriage of a Catholic to an unbeliever, of which we shall speak further on. (5) The omission of the required proclamation or public announcement of the marriage, from which, however, the bishop can grant a dispensation.

The diriment impediments—i.e., those which render marriage invalid—are:

(1) Absence of consent—if, for instance, force is employed to compel any one against his or her will to submit to be married. (2) Error as to the person—e.g., if a man thinking to marry one person is united to another by mistake. If, however, the mistake is not with regard to the individual, but to some quality or property she was thought to possess, for instance, if a man thinking to marry a rich wife finds her to be penniless, this does not in any wise affect the validity of the marriage. (3) Absence of celibacy—no married person during the lifetime of the other can contract a second marriage, nor can members of a religious order marry, nor clerics who have received one of the three major orders (subdiaconate, diaconate, and priesthood). (4) The fact of either party being unbaptized. Marriages between Christians and Jews, pagans, or

Turks are null. (5) Consanguinity and affinity to the fourth degree, or spiritual relationship which arises from sponsorship. There are, besides, other impediments, concerning which, if they exist, those who intend to marry should consult their confessor, on which account the betrothed should in the commencement of their engagement lay their circumstances before their pastor, concealing nothing from him. He can then tell them from whom a dispensation must be obtained, whether from the Pope or from the bishop, after he has examined the reasons which render a dispensation necessary. If false reasons should be given and a dispensation obtained in an underhand way the marriage would not only be invalid, but sinful.

Mixed Marriages.

Marriages between Catholics and baptized persons of a different religious creed are termed mixed marriages. In the early ages of the Church such marriages were prohibited. They are only tolerated in the present day on condition of a promise being given that the children shall be brought up in the Catholic religion, and that the non-Catholic party shall not molest the Catholic in the exercise of his or her religion. On the other hand, the Catholic party is bound to use every exertion and employ all

permissible and attainable means to bring back the heretic to the fold of the Church. These means are kindly instruction, fervent prayer, and good example, so that the non-Catholic may see what the grace of God can do in a true and faithful Christian.

The Apostle does, it is true, tell the Corinthians: "If any brother have a wife that believeth not, and she consent to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And if the woman have a husband that believeth not, and he consent to dwell with her, let her not put away her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the believing husband." (1 Cor. vii. 12–14.)

But here the Apostle is speaking of marriages which were contracted before one of the parties embraced the Christian faith, and what the Apostle said then applies now when one of two persons who were married as non-Catholics is received into the Church. But when a Catholic and Protestant marry it is the Church's duty to demand the avoidance of anything that might be an encroachment upon her rights or might endanger the salvation of the Catholic. The following are the principal reasons why mixed marriages are condemned:

1. One condition to happiness in wedded life is unquestionably harmony of opinion, and, as marriage is a religious union, unanimity of religious belief is indispensable. This unanimity cannot exist

in a mixed marriage. A marriage of this nature cannot be what it ought to be, an image of the intimate union of Christ with the Church, because the fundamental condition is wanting, and that is faith. The Church cannot do otherwise than disapprove of such marriages.

2. The chief and most sacred duty of parents is to bring their children to Christ, to train them in piety and in the fear of God. This cannot be done if the father and mother hold different religious tenets and the child does not know whom to follow. The result will be the same with him as with his parents—he will be indifferent to all religion.

3. If when such a marriage is contracted the faith of the Catholic party is already somewhat weak it is much to be feared that the non-Catholic will make it difficult for the other to fulfil his religious duties, will mock at many religious practices, will attack the doctrines of the Church in conversation on religious subjects; and thus dissension and contention will ensue, or it will end in the Catholic party abandoning his or her religion.

4. Non-Catholics do not regard the nuptial bond as indissoluble; they can be divorced without much difficulty, and are free to marry again, which the Catholic cannot do. Thus in mixed marriages the Catholic is at a great disadvantage in regard to his conjugal rights.

In condemning mixed marriages and imposing the conditions given above, the Church only acts in

defence of her own rights and those of the faithful whom God has confided to her charge. She cannot be otherwise than solicitous for the eternal welfare of her children. The faithful on their side owe obedience to the Church as their spiritual mother. And if, despite her disapproval, a Catholic desires to marry a Protestant he cannot do so without a dispensation, which must be procured from the bishop through the parish priest. Both contracting parties must previously give a promise in writing to comply conscientiously with the conditions on which alone a dispensation will be granted.

The Duties of the Married.

Those who are joined together in holy matrimony are bound for their whole life long to live together in prosperity and adversity, in health and sickness, and to share each other's every joy and sorrow. That is no easy task, and it is not in vain that Christ has attached a sacramental grace to wedlock, for no one needs more strength and support than do married persons to discharge the duties their state requires of them.

1. The married ought above all to live together in love and fidelity and be "two in one flesh." They ought to aid one another in bearing the burdens of life, and mutually encourage one another in the practice of Christian virtues. "Bear ye

one another's burdens," the Apostle says ; "and so you shall fulfil the law of Christ." (Gal. vi. 2.) And the son of Sirach tells us : "A friend and companion meeting together in season, but above them both is a wife with her husband." (Ecclus. xl. 23.)

2. Very carefully ought married persons to avoid every impropriety inconsistent with the sanctity of their state. For purity is as necessary in a married as in a single state. Conjugal fidelity ought not to be transgressed even in thought, and everything should be shunned which might awaken feelings of suspicion or distrust on either side.

Adultery is not only a shameful sin, branded as such by the express command of God, but also most calamitous in its consequences. The adulterer becomes an object of disgrace and infamy; he destroys the peace of the family, he renders it impossible to bring up the children well, he deeply wrongs his innocent spouse. The sin of adultery leads to lavish expenditure of property, the breaking up of the household, and to countless sins, sometimes even to the murder of a husband or wife. On this account Our Lord utters this warning against indulgence even in looks which may be occasion of sin : "Whosoever shall look upon a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt. v. 28.) "He that is an adulterer, for the folly of his heart shall destroy his own soul; he gathereth to himself shame and dishonor." (Prov. vi. 32, 33.) "Marriage honorable in all, and

the bed undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge." (1 Heb. xiii. 4.)

3. The husband is the head of the family. He ought to exercise his authority with charity and gentleness. "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it. So also ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself. For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church. Let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself." (Eph. v. 25, 28, 29, 33.)

It is the special duty of the husband to provide for the maintenance of the family. "If any man have not care of his own, and specially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." (1 Tim. v. 8.)

4. The wife ought to love her husband and obey him. This God commanded from the beginning when He said to the woman: "Thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee." (Gen. iii. 16.) The Apostle also exhorts those to whom he writes: "Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord." (Eph. v. 22.)

Wives are particularly admonished not to dispute or wrangle: "Let the woman learn in silence, with all subjection." (1 Tim. ii. 11.)

The woman's chief adornment ought not to consist in dress and finery, but in virtue and modesty.

"This is a great Sacrament, but I speak in Christ and in the Church."—Ephes. v. 32.



"What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."—Mark x. 9.

MATRIMONY.

THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

Reflection.—In the New Law matrimony is not a mere natural or civil contract, but a sacrament, a means of grace and salvation for those who are called to that state. Among Christians the union of husband and wife is a figure of the union of Christ with His Church, and is therefore sacred and holy. The tie of a valid marriage cannot be dissolved except by the death of one of the parties, for our divine Saviour says: "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (Mark x. 9.) Marriage, being a sacrament, must be received in a state of grace; it would be a horrid sacrilege to receive it in the state of sin. The sacrament of marriage is subject to the regulations of the Church. A Catholic cannot without grievous sin contract marriage without the presence of the priest The Church for very good reason detests and abhors mixed marriages, and does not permit them without serious cause and under certain necessary conditions.

Practice.—If you are yet single and feel called to the state of matrimony, pray to God to direct you in your choice, and prepare yourself for it by a pure life. If already married, strive to fulfil your duty as a Catholic husband (wife), bear patiently with the faults of your wife (husband), give a good example to your children, and bring them up from their infancy in the knowledge and practice of the true faith.

Prayer.—O my God, enlighten and direct all who are called to the state of matrimony, and enable them worthily to receive this sacrament. Deign to bless all husbands and wives, that they may ever live in mutual love, concord, patience and fidelity, and bring up their children as good Catholics. O Mary, obtain for us all the grace to lead a good life and to die a holy death. Amen.

The Apostle says: "Women also in decent apparel: adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety, not with plaited hair, or gold, or costly attire, but as it becometh women professing godliness, with good works." (1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.) "Whose adorning let it be the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit, which is rich in the sight of God. For after this manner heretofore the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands." (1 Pet. iii. 3–5.)

Nothing could be more admirable than the instructions given by her parents to Sara, the wife of Tobias, on her leaving her father's house. They bade her behave respectfully to her father-in-law and mother-in-law, love her husband, rule the servants, superintend the household, and conduct herself in a manner that was beyond reproach.

5. The first time a Christian wife goes out after childbirth let her repair to the Church to ask the priest's benediction. Formerly it was the general custom — and a beautiful custom, too — for the mother to bring her newly born infant with her and present it to the Lord, as Joseph and Mary did.

Examples.

A beautiful example of conjugal affection is afforded us by Elcana, the father of Samuel the prophet. The Lord had denied to him and his wife, whose

name was Anna, the blessing of children, and as often as Anna went up with her husband to Silo to offer sacrifice to the Lord she wept and did not eat. Then Elcana, her husband, said to her, "Anna, why weepest thou? and why dost thou not eat? and why dost thou afflict thy heart? Am I not better to thee, than ten children?" The Lord rewarded this love and gentleness on his part and a son was born to them, Samuel, who was afterwards appointed by God the judge over Israel.

Tobias and Sara are a model to all married people. When Sara was so extremely unfortunate as to have several husbands whom she had successively espoused slain by an evil spirit she was able to say: "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I never coveted a husband, and have kept my soul clean from all lust. Never have I joined myself with them that play, neither have I made myself partaker with them that walk in lightness. But a husband I consented to take, with Thy fear, not with my lust." (Tob. iii. 16–18.) And Tobias the younger prayed thus: "Lord, thou knowest that not for fleshly lust do I take my sister to wife, but only for the love of posterity, in which Thy name may be blessed for ever and ever." (Tob. viii. 9.)

Holy Scripture gives this testimony to the virtue of Zachary and Elizabeth: "They were both just before God, walking in all the commandments of the Lord without blame." (Luke i. 6.)

The Ceremonies of the Sacrament of Matrimony.

When the formalities of the marriage contract have been gone through, the banns published, and the betrothed have received the sacraments of Penance and of the Altar, let them betake themselves to the Church, accompanied by two proper witnesses and by their relatives and friends. The bride and her attendant damsels, called the bridesmaids, wear on their heads wreaths of flowers, betokening innocence. The priest first blesses the ring; then he requires those present should they know of any impediment to the marriage to state it, in virtue of the obedience due to the Church. If no objection is made he asks the bridegroom if, after mature deliberation and of his own free will, he will take N. here present for his lawful wife. He next addresses the same question to the bride; and both the one and the other express their consent by answering: I will. With these words the marriage is concluded. The bride and bridegroom then hold each other by the right hand and pledge their troth, after which the priest says, their right hands being joined: "I join you together in marriage according to the appointed rite of holy Church, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." He then gives the ring which has been blessed, to the bridegroom, who places

it upon the fourth finger of the bride's left hand. The ring is a symbol of the fetters which she takes upon herself. She no longer belongs to herself, but to her spouse, and the ring is to serve as a continual reminder to her to preserve fidelity to her consort. If the bride has not been previously married the priest blesses the newly married couple before the conclusion of the Mass, saying: "May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob be with you and Himself fulfil His blessing upon you, that you may see your children's children unto the third and fourth generation, and may afterwards have everlasting life without end, by the help of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

If the nuptial benediction takes place before the Mass this benediction of the newly married, who are kneeling before the altar, is given immediately after the *Ite, missa est,* and before the ordinary blessing of the priest.

Practical Application.

1. "A good wife is a good portion, she shall be given in the portion of them that fear God to a man for his good deeds." (Ecclus. xxvi. 3.) Let those, then, who desire to marry marry in the fear of God, remembering that the evil enemy has power over those who shut out God from themselves and from their mind. (Tob. vi. 17.) The best guarantee of a happy marriage is an innocent and pure life before marriage.

2. Above all it is a thing to be avoided for young people to make acquaintance and consort together and exchange promises of marriage a long time before there is any prospect of their marrying, because it cannot be known how circumstances or the persons themselves may change. This has been the ruin of many people's happiness. Many enter the marriage state with the guilt of sin upon their conscience, and not only defraud themselves of the sacramental grace which the Sacrament of Matrimony confers, but commit a sacrilege by receiving it unworthily. Whence comes it that there are so many miserable marriages? From this, that so bad a preparation is made beforehand and so godless a life led afterwards.

3. No marriage ought to be contracted without the consent of the parents so long as the contracting parties are under their control. The first instance we know of in which this was done is that of Esau. (Gen. xxviii. 9.) But Esau was one whom God had rejected. Parents always have the best interests of their children at heart, and if it so happens that the child finds it quite impossible to comply with his parents' wishes let him not act upon his own responsibility, but take the advice of sensible persons, especially that of his confessor or director. The confessor and others who are quite unprejudiced can view the matter in so different a light to one whose eyes are blinded by love.

The Sacramentals.

Besides the holy sacraments there are things which the Church blesses in order that by the pious use of them the Christian may obtain from God temporal benefits and spiritual health. Now as these things bear a certain resemblance to the sacraments, they are called *sacramentals*. Holy water, consecrated oil, salt, ashes, palms, tapers—in short, all things of that kind which are blessed by the Church—are sacramentals.

1. A sacramental is, therefore, an outward sign to which the Church seeks to attach a supernatural grace, and which in view of this she blesses. It differs from a sacrament inasmuch as the sacramentals were not instituted by Jesus Christ; nor is a special grace necessarily attached by divine appointment to the outward sign, it only accompanies it at the prayers of the Church. By the prayer of the Church we mean a prayer which the priest offers in the name of the whole Church, consequently in the name of Jesus Christ also, who is the head of the Church. There can be no doubt that the prayer of the Church is at all times pleasing to God and efficacious in obtaining its object.

Yet since the Church cannot bestow the graces in question, but can only implore them, the granting of the prayer depends upon the wise will of God, and also upon the devotion and merits of those who employ the sacramentals. When Our Lord sent out the apostles He said to them: "When you come into a house, salute it, saying: Peace be to this house. And if that house be worthy, your peace shall come upon it; but if it be not worthy, your peace shall return to you." (Matt. x. 12, 13.)

2. The sacraments convey to the soul an increase of sanctifying grace and special graces effectual to salvation, whereas by means of the sacramentals only grace in general is conferred. The outward signs do not, however, merely indicate the grace conferred, but they are the channel of it. The benefits they procure for us are principally of a temporal nature—protection against the assaults of the evil enemy, succor in time of sickness, and such like various blessings.

3. We experience the power of the Church's prayers on our behalf in her benedictions and consecrations and in her exorcisms. To bless means to wish something good to another. Thus Isaac blessed Jacob, saying: "God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, abundance of corn and wine." (Gen. xxvii. 28.) The patriarchs of the Old Testament were wont to bless their children in a similar manner when they felt their end approaching. The priests of the Old Testa-

ment, too, gave their blessing to the people in the name of God; to do so was one of the duties of their ministry, and a form of words was prescribed for their use. It was as follows: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord show His face to thee and have mercy upon thee; the Lord turn His countenance to thee and give thee peace." (Numb. vi. 24–26.) To this invocation of the name of God the fulfilment of the desire expressed was promised. "They shall invoke My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." (Numb. vi. 27.) It stands to reason that the priests of the New Testament possess the power to confer this benediction in a far higher degree, for they are eminently the representatives of Jesus Christ.

4. By the medium of her priests the Church blesses persons as well as things, as Our Lord did. We read that He blessed little children, laying His hands on them. (Mark x. 16.) And when He fed the multitude in the desert with five loaves and two fishes He first looked up to heaven and then blessed those articles of food. (Luke ix. 16.) The like is done by the Church, for the priest prays in her name that God would vouchsafe to make all things conduce to our temporal and eternal welfare.

5. Consecration is a special kind of blessing. If any person or object is separated and set apart to be specially devoted to the service of God this is

called consecration or dedication, as distinct from benediction or blessing. Very often benediction accompanies consecration, or it is employed as a preparation for consecration.

6. Various forms of benediction precede an exorcism or adjuration of the evil enemy. Through original sin we have been brought under the dominion of the devil and are exposed to manifold temptations on his part: "Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour." (1 Pet. v. 8.)

Exorcism is a solemn adjuration or command with the view of obliging the devil to depart from some creature. Thus Our Lord commanded the devils to go forth by whom the unfortunate Gerasens were possessed. He also delivered many others who were possessed, and expressly gave His apostles and disciples authority to cast out devils in His name. Priests make use of this power principally before administering holy Baptism, and also when they have reason to believe that a sick person is possessed or that the malady is caused by demoniacal influences. Yet in this case priests are prohibited from exercising their powers of exorcism without previously reporting the matter to the bishop and obtaining his permission.

Practical Application.

Since it is the good pleasure of God to communicate graces to us so abundantly by means of the

sacramentals, it would evince culpable indifference on our part were we not to make diligent use of them; for the Christian is bound to employ every means of increasing the grace of God within him. Let us be deeply thankful for these spiritual benefits. Let us take heed never in any way to ridicule those who have recourse to the sacramentals and make use of objects that have been blessed; for whoso despises the sacramentals despises the prayer of the Church, and despises the head of the Church, Jesus Christ.

"Blessed be the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, in Christ." (Eph. i. 3.)

Consecrations and Benedictions.

The Consecration of Individuals.

It stands to reason that the consecration of the Pope is the first and foremost of consecrations, since he is the earthly head of the Church. It takes place in Rome, at the altar which stands over the tomb of the apostles and princes of the Church SS. Peter and Paul. The Pope elect is carried into the church seated on a throne. When he enters the master of ceremonies holds up before him a reed surmounted by a handful of flax, which being lighted flashes up and as quickly dies out, the

clerk meanwhile chanting the words: "Holy Father! thus passeth away the glory of the world." This is done three times. In the Mass which is celebrated the Gospel is read both in Latin and in Greek, to signify that the Supreme Pontiff rules over all Christians throughout the world. The triple crown is placed on the head of the Pope elect with the words: "Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns, and know that thou art the father of princes and kings, the ruler of the world, and the vicar of Our Saviour Jesus Christ."

Bishops and abbots also receive solemn consecration. The clothing of those who enter religious orders is accompanied by benedictions. Young women who desire to dedicate themselves to the service of God in the cloister have these questions addressed to them: "Dost thou promise to persevere in the observance of chastity? Dost thou desire to be consecrated to God and become the spouse of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the most high God?" On an affirmative reply being given the ring and veil are delivered to the postulant. The ring indicates that the person thus consecrated becomes the bride of Jesus Christ, the veil that she will lead a life of seclusion from the world in union with her divine Spouse.

Catholic kings and emperors also are anointed at their coronation, to imply that they are the chief protectors of the Church, who defend the faith,

administer justice, and protect the widow and orphan. Sword, crown, and sceptre are delivered to them as symbols of sovereign power, and in the coronation Mass the anointed monarch receives holy communion.

Consecration of Places.

1. Churches are above all to be consecrated, for not only are they destined for divine worship, but Our Lord Himself makes them His dwelling-place. Even under the Old Testament the Temple was solemnly dedicated; Solomon kept the festival seven days, and all Israel with him, and he offered in sacrifice 22,000 oxen and 120,000 rams. (2 Paral. vii. 8, 5.) Very much the same was done when the second Temple was consecrated under Esdras (1 Esdr. vi.), and also in the days of the Machabees. (1 Mach. iv.) The Christians could, of course, erect no churches until free exercise of their religion was permitted them, and this was not done universally until the reign of Constantine the Great (312 A.D.). The ceremonial for the dedication of churches is of the greatest antiquity.

The ground plan of the church ought to be in the form of a cross, and the altar ought to be placed at the east end, so that the faithful who worship there may look towards the Orient, whence the natural light of day rises upon us, which is an emblem of

the supernatural light, the Sun of justice, Jesus Christ. On the interior walls of the church twelve crosses must be painted, and before each one a sconce fixed to hold a taper; these crosses betoken the twelve apostles, by whom the light of the Gospel was shed abroad. The bishop and attendant clergy walk three times round the outside of the church, each time knocking with the pastoral staff at the door of the main entrance and demanding admittance; the door is not opened until the third time of knocking, when the procession enters the building. The invocation of the Holy Ghost then follows, and the bishop inscribes on the pavement of the church the letters of the alphabet in Latin and in Greek characters, to signify that the Gospel is to be preached throughout the whole world in every tongue. The altar is anointed with oil, and sprinkled with ashes, salt, wine, and holy water, symbolical of penance, wisdom, courage, and purity. In the altar, which receives a special consecration, some relics are deposited in a cavity, because in early times it was customary to say Mass on the tombs of the martyrs. This may have been done in accordance with the vision of St. John: "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held." (Apoc. vi. 9.)

2. The churchyard and the graves are likewise consecrated. The churchyard is so called because as a rule it is situated round the church, not only to

enable the faithful to visit the graves frequently, but also to indicate that the faithful departed still belong to Christ's flock and that they too assemble unseen around the altar of sacrifice. And because we hope and pray that the souls of those who have fallen asleep in Christ may rest in peace, as their bodies repose after life's conflict, the graveyard is also called a cemetery or place of sleep. By the Germans the name of *Gottesacker* (God's acre) is also given to it, in reference to the resurrection of the dead. "The body is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption." (1 Cor. xv. 42.)

On the day preceding that appointed for the consecration of a churchyard or cemetery a crucifix is erected on the spot, together with a triangle in which three tapers are fixed, to be lighted at the time of the ceremony. It is Christ crucified who gives us new life by His death, and He is Himself the perpetual light which shall shine on the faithful departed.

If at the time of an interment the cemetery has not already been consecrated the grave is blessed, prayers being recited over it and holy water sprinkled upon it. How sublime are the prayers which the priest pronounces when the body is borne to the grave: "Come to his assistance, ye saints of God; come forth to meet him, ye angels of the Lord, receiving his soul, offering it in the sight of the Most High. May Christ receive thee, who called thee; may the angels conduct thee to Abra-

ham's bosom. Eternal rest give to him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him."

The Blessing of Things.

The Church blesses, furthermore, all articles appertaining to divine worship before they are used for that purpose, such as chalices, patens, monstrances, vessels for the holy oils, the tabernacle, tapers, banners, the sacerdotal vestments, the linen, etc. These articles are thus set apart for a special use. In like manner not only were Aaron and his sons anointed with oil by the Lord's command, but all the vessels to be employed in the service of the sanctuary, even to the brazen laver, with its foot. The ceremonial of blessing consists in the recital of prayers and sprinkling the object with holy water. The bishop reserves to himself the consecration of the chalice and paten; they are anointed with chrism.

The blessing of bells is a solemn rite, dating from the seventh century. In early times only the largest churches had bells: in fact it was quite an exceptional thing to have them at all. We read in history that when Clothaire, king of France, was besieging the town of Orleans in the year 659 Bishop Lupus caused the bells of St. Stephen's Church to be loudly rung, and this sound caused such alarm in the enemy's ranks that they all decamped. When bells are blessed they are washed both inside and out,

and the officiating priest prays that wheresoever the sound of the bell is heard all hostile powers may be put to flight, and tempests, lightning, and hail depart. The bell is anointed with chrism and the holy oils used for extreme unction, and a censer containing red-hot coals and incense placed beneath it. The church-bell is regarded to a certain extent as a companion and friend of man, which accompanies him throughout his whole life from the font to the grave, and shares his joys and sorrows.

The blessing of bells is sometimes called by the people christening of bells, probably on account of the cleansing and anointing that take place. This expression is not, however, known in the Church's parlance. And yet she allows bells to have sponsors, like children at their Baptism. It is a very admirable custom to give each bell the name of some saint, both in order to distinguish one from another and also as a means of commending one's self to the protection of that saint.

Holy water stands foremost among the things that are blessed by the Church for the use of the faithful. It is to be found in every church, and no Christian household ought to be without it. Water and salt are first exorcised, then blessed and mingled together, and the priest prays in the name of the Church that God would vouchsafe to sanctify them both, so that wherever the water is sprinkled the evil enemy may depart and the holy spirit of God enter in, and that it may be conducive

to the health of body and soul of all who use it. In the churches it is a symbol of cleansing, to remind the faithful that they must assist with clean hearts at the holy sacrifice.

There is a special ritual used on Holy Saturday and the eve of Pentecost for the blessing of the water to be used in Baptism, as also for the blessing of water on the Epiphany, when we commemorate the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan, the ceremony by which He sanctified water as a means of grace and instituted the Sacrament of Baptism. The devout Catholic ought to sprinkle himself with holy water at least every morning and night, at the same time renewing his good resolution to serve God always with a pure mind and an upright intention.

Besides the ceremonies of blessing already mentioned there are:

1. The blessing of candles on the Purification.

2. The blessing of ashes on Ash Wednesday, when, at the commencement of Lent, ashes are put upon the heads of the faithful to admonish them to do penance and turn to God, and also as a reminder that we are all subject to the law of death. While giving the ashes the priest says to each one: "Remember, O man, that thou art dust, and to dust thou wilt return."

3. The blessing of palms, which takes place on Palm Sunday, is to remind us of Our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and also that a time will come when we ought to appear before God

bearing the palm of victory. After the blessing the distribution of palms takes place, followed by a solemn procession.

4. In some countries plants and flowers are blessed on the feast of Our Lady's assumption. In the Canticle of Canticles Mary is compared to the loveliest flowers. She is described as "the flower of the field and the lily of the valleys; a garden enclosed, a garden whereof the aromatical spices flow." (Cant. ii. 1, 4, 12, 16.) The flowers which are blessed on the day of her glorious assumption into heaven denote the virtues of the Blessed Virgin, the sweet fragrance whereof rejoices the heart and stimulates us to their imitation.

In many churches the throat is blessed on St. Blase's day. Tradition says that this holy bishop through his prayers delivered a boy in whose throat a fish-bone had lodged from death by suffocation. Hence his intercession is invoked in all diseases of the throat. The priest blesses two tapers, lights them, and holds them crosswise over the neck of the person to be blessed, saying: "May the Lord deliver thee from all affections of the throat and all other ailments."

On St. Agatha's Day in some localities loaves of bread are carried into the Church and placed on a side altar to be blessed by the priest.

5. A special ceremony, performed by the Pope only in the first and seventh year of his pontificate, is the blessing of the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God).

Waxen images of a lamb are fashioned out of the paschal candle. The lamb is a symbol of the sacrificial Victim, as St. John designates the Saviour: "The Lamb of God, Him who taketh away the sins of the world." (John i. 29.) The *Agnus Dei* is often worn round the neck. It serves as a reminder to us to lead a life of innocence.

6. Rosaries, crosses, medals, are also blessed for the faithful, and indulgences are attached to them. This can only be done by a priest who possesses the requisite powers, whereas every priest can bless articles of food, domestic animals, fields, houses, the marriage-bed, etc. These benedictions express the good wishes of the Church. Mention must be made of the prayers for fine weather, which are offered from the feast of the Finding of the Holy Cross (3d May) until the Exaltation of the Cross (14th September.)

Hence it will be seen that the devout Catholic possesses in the sacramentals a sure weapon against the evil enemy and an inexhaustible source of temporal and spiritual blessings, of which he must prove himself worthy if he would avail himself of them.

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